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# **Adolescent Migrant Worker Experiences and Attitudes about Child Labour in Samut Sakhon, Thailand**

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THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER  
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# **Adolescent Migrant Worker Experiences and Attitudes about Child Labour in Samut Sakhon, Thailand**

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Thesis submitted for Master of Philosophy in Development Studies

## **Summary**

This thesis explores how adolescent migrant workers are encouraged to and limited in expressing their attitudes about child labour, economic and non-economic activities, and the prevention of exploitation. This study investigates the process of sharing attitudes about those concepts among adolescent migrants and among NGOs, community leaders, and adolescent migrant workers. It also considers the benefits of the sharing of attitudes from the perspective of adolescent migrants. On the basis of the integration of qualitative research methods, this research was conducted with adolescent migrant workers in Samut Sakhon province, Thailand over five months in 2015-2016. This research relies on 9 case studies and inputs from 16 focus group participants (between 17 and 19 years of age) and 10 interviews with officials from Thai schools and NGOs, community leaders, and staff of learning centres.

Study findings indicate that contexts in which there are biases, power relations, and particular cultures of expression influence opportunities for adolescent migrants to share attitudes. Networks of supporters in the community increase opportunities for the sharing of experiences and attitudes. This study also reveals the ability of adolescent migrants to respond to the limited opportunities to share attitudes through processes of self-adaptation, selection of space and activities, and the creation of personal tactics, which vary according to circumstances.

Although there are agencies sharing information about child labour and its prevention, adolescent migrant workers more often learn to manage work relationships and to prevent being exploited through practical experience in the workplace. However, adolescent migrant workers benefit from participation in self-help groups. Engagement in self-help groups develops trust with self-defined 'supporters' and leads to opportunities for young people to communicate with one another.

The development of communication skills, relationships, and self-adaptation among adolescent migrants are enhanced through involvement in self-help groups. However, the focus group method used in this study is another option to enhance understanding of the process of sharing attitudes. In this study, young respondents are provided with the opportunity to learn about the process of sharing attitudes and the benefits of this process through participation in focus group discussions. The increased level of adolescent migrants' confidence, derived from contact with outsiders and engagement in focus group discussions, may lead to experiences of sharing attitudes in the future. Concerning the benefits of attitudes contributing to the unity of community, I propose that cooperation with multi-agencies in the community will increase engagement in the process of sharing attitudes and experiences among adolescent migrants and bring about positive changes in the community. The quality of shared attitudes among

adolescent migrants will improve, and hidden issues in the community will be exposed, leading to more effective social policies that reduce child exploitation and raise awareness of social exclusion.

## List of Abbreviations

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| AEC     | ASEAN Economics Community                  |
| HRDF    | Human Rights and Development Foundation    |
| ILO     | International Labour Organization          |
| LPN     | Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation |
| MOU     | Memorandum of Understanding                |
| MWRN    | Migrant Worker Rights Network              |
| NGO     | Non- Governmental Organisation             |
| OT      | Overtime                                   |
| QA      | Quality Assurance                          |
| QC      | Quality Control                            |
| TR 38/1 | TOR ROR 38/1                               |
| UN      | United Nation                              |

## Definitions of Key Terms

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Adolescent migrant(s)        | Migrant(s) between 17 and 19 years of age, working in factories for seafood processing and manufacturing, frozen seafood manufacturing, and chemical and plastic manufacturing in Amphoe Mueang, Samut Sakhon province, as per the criteria of this study   |
| Adolescent migrant worker(s) | Migrant(s) between 17 and 19 years of age, working in factories for seafood processing and manufacturing, frozen seafood manufacturing, and chemical and plastic manufacturing in Amphoe Mueang, Samut Sakhon province, as per the criteria of this study   |
| Adult participant(s)         | Interviewee(s) from three Thai schools: the Luangphaet school, the Watsrisutaram school, and the Wansirimongkol school. Four NGOs were involved: Rak Thai Foundation, Labour Rights Promotion Network (LPN) Foundation, Migrant Worker Rights Network (MWRN), Human Rights and Development Foundation (HRDF), and St. Ann's Catholic Aid Centre for Migrants. Community leaders, staff members from the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education, and staff of learning centres also participated in this study. |
| Burmans                      | One of the ethnic groups in Burma   |
| Burmese                      | Citizens/people of the country of Burma (not of a specific ethnicity) and the official language used in Burma   |
| BunKhun                      | A deep sense of gratitude towards parents   |
| Migrant youth                | Migrant(s) between 17 and 19 years of age, working in factories for seafood processing and manufacturing, frozen seafood manufacturing, and chemical and plastic manufacturing in Amphoe Mueang, Samut Sakhon province, as per the criteria of this study   |

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Young participant(s)    | Migrant(s) between 17 and 19 years of age, working in factories for seafood processing and manufacturing, frozen seafood manufacturing, and chemical and plastic manufacturing in Amphoe Mueang, Samut Sakhon province, as per the criteria of this study |
| Young migrant(s)        | Migrant(s) less than 25 years of age  |
| Young migrant worker(s) | Migrant(s) between 17 and 19 years of age, working in factories for seafood processing and manufacturing, frozen seafood manufacturing, and chemical and plastic manufacturing in Amphoe Mueang, Samut Sakhon province, as per the criteria of this study |



## List of Indigenous Terms

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Amphoe                             | ‘District’ in Thai   |
| Amphoe Mueang                      | ‘Capital District’ in Thai   |
| Mahachai                           | The name of the Sub-district in Samut Sakhon province and the informal name of Samut Sakhon province                         |
| Line                               | Description of work related to the position of a general worker that mostly use technical tools and machines in a factory    |
| Ramonya Youth Organization         | A group organised by and composed of adolescent migrant members studying at the Thai-Mon learning centre, Wat Pom            |
| Song Kran-Day                      | Shared Thai and Burmese New Year (in April) in which there is a traditional activity of pouring water                        |
| Thai-Mon Learning Center, Wat Khok | The learning centre formed and organised by Mon self-help groups, located around the area of the Sri Booranawad temple       |
| Thai-Mon Learning Center, Wat Pom  | The learning centre formed and organised by Mon self-help groups, located around the area of the ‘Pom Wichian Chodok’ temple |

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This research explores how adolescent migrant workers are encouraged to and limited in expressing their attitudes about the terms child work, child labour, economic activities and non-economic activities, and the prevention of exploitation. This paper explores whether adolescent migrant labourers are encouraged to express their voices and participate in matters in which are involved; in what ways their ideas can be promoted; whether there is space for adolescent migrant labourers to share attitudes and to propose collective practices for protection against exploitation; and whether adolescent migrant workers are supported by agencies, including community-based supporters, in accessing opportunities to share attitudes, ideas, and experiences.

The research also investigates the role of adolescent migrant workers in the process of sharing attitudes about different concepts and access to the protection against exploitation in Samut Sakhon, Thailand. Adolescent migrants' views, ideas, and attitudes about child labour, their work, economic activities, and ways to avoid child labour are considered. The role of adolescent migrant workers in response to limited opportunities to share attitudes through personal tactics and the process of self-adaptation is also explored. Adolescent voices are beneficial for the construction of strategic practices that are useful for adolescent migrants in the context of Samut Sakhon. Relying on the theme of 'listening to young people's voices,' this research uses various research methods, including focus group discussions. These methods emphasise the promotion of the right to express their opinions on matters affecting them. Adolescent migrant labourers were offered an opportunity to express their perceptions of images of themselves, which might differ from images of adolescent migrant labourers in other contexts

Further, this study examines whether there are attitudes, experiences, and information about terms child work, child labour, economic activities and non-economic activities, and the prevention of the exploitation shared by NGOs, community leaders and community-based supporters, and how those agencies share attitudes, ideas, experiences, and information about those terms. Finally, it considers how this process benefits adolescent migrants. Experiences of group activities with friends and participation in the focus group discussion facilitated the process of learning the benefits of attitude sharing. Adolescent migrants, who were the focus group participants, could understand the process of sharing and realise how the process affected them. Looking at the process of sharing attitudes in this context, I realised that group activities formed by people in the community could represent the sharing. Thus, in this study, the focus on the benefits of group activities, viewed as the process of sharing attitudes existing in the community, is included in the examination of the benefits of the process of sharing attitudes.

Interviews with NGO workers, school directors, community leaders, and local government officers brings about an understanding of how adolescent migrant workers are encouraged to express (and are prevented from sharing) their attitudes about their

working life and leisure time. Speaking with adolescent migrant workers as individuals, in pairs, or in groups led to an understanding of their perceptions that cannot be detached from the experiences that shaped those views.

Sharing ideas about the terms child exploitation, economic activities, non-economic activities, and the prevention of child labour among individuals and in groups is seen as a process that allows adolescent migrants to reveal opportunities to break down stereotypical images of themselves. They have had the capacity to describe the issue of child exploitation from their own perspective rather than acquiescing to perceptions that cause negative attitudes towards them and their working life. Each perception shared by each individual is also meaningful as a reflection of the individual construction of social realities (Berger and Luckmann, 1966; Clair et al., p.3) relevant to the child work, child labour, the experience of exploitation, and various relevant terms. The process of externalisation, reification, and internalisation, or the 'sociological process' (Clair et al., p.3) is accumulated from each individual. On the basis of different backgrounds and experiences, thoughts, emotions, and perceptions expressed by each individual, I see the specification of social values derived from his/her thought process, output, or unique answers and the ability of each individual to create, reconstruct, and criticise matters that they have been engaged in every day.

## 1.1 Background

Samut Sakhon or 'Mahachai'<sup>1</sup> is the province with the highest number of migrant workers from Burma, but it is also home to migrant workers who have migrated from Cambodia and Laos. According to statistical data in March 2015 from the Samut Sakhon Provincial Employment Office, there were 256,560 registered migrant workers from three countries: 219,005 migrant workers from Burma, 23,402 migrant workers from Cambodia, and 14,153 migrant workers from Laos. Wanting security or to live somewhere that respects human security and human rights (Keawfong, 2009), adolescent migrants from Burma decide to work in Thailand. Further pull factors include the demand for cheap labour, the scarcity of the Thai labour force in the fishery sector, the conditional working agreements (Memorandum of Understanding: MOU), and the direction of Thailand to integrate with the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) at the end of 2015. This has led to a high number of migrants from neighbouring countries.

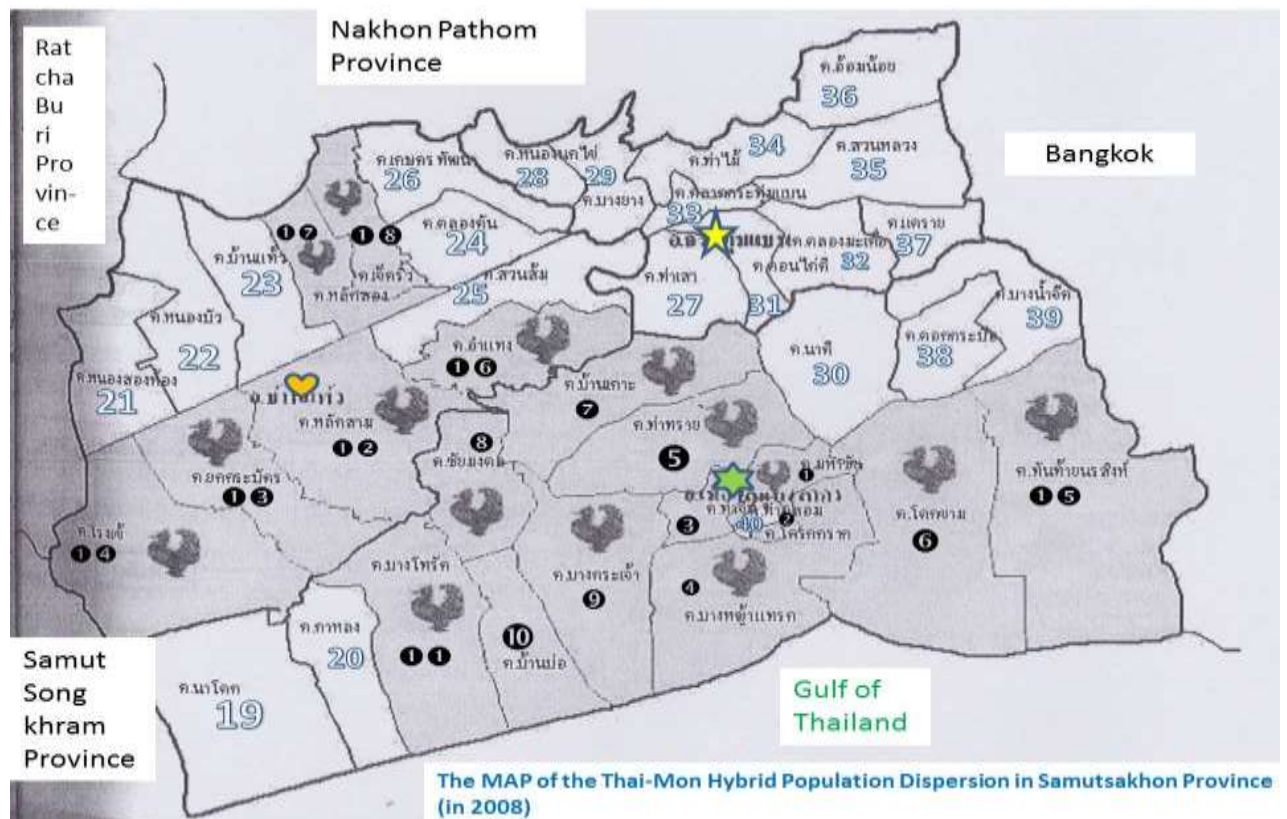
Regarding ethnicity, the majority of migrants living in this area are Mon. According to the journal, the *Voice of Mon* (2007) and interviews with NGO staff and community leaders, the number of Mon migrants living in Samut Sakhon province was higher (approximately 70%) than migrants from other ethnic groups (Baonerd, 2007b, p.9; Baonerd, 2007c, p.5). With the exception of the population of migrants with Mon ethnicity, other ethnic groups in Samut Sakhon province include Burmans—the second highest number—and Dawei, Karen, and Shan. 'Mahachai' or Samut Sakhon hosts the

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<sup>1</sup> This is not only the name of one main sub-district of the Amphoe Mueang in Samut Sakhon, but it is known as another name of this province (Baonerd, 2007a, p.7).



second-highest number of Mon-Thai people, lower than the number in Pratumtani province. Given the large number of Mon people from Burma and the large numbers of Thai-Mon people, Samut Sakhon has the highest number of Mon people (Baonerd, 2007a, p.7).



**District:** ★ Amphoe Mueang ★ Krathum Baen ♥ Ban Phaeo **Sub-district:** 1)Maha Chai 2) Krok Krak 3) Tha Chin 4) Bang Ya Phraek 5) Tha Sai 6) Khok Kham 7) Ban Ko 8) Chai Mongkhon 9) Bang Krachao 10) Ban Bo 11) Bang Tho Rat 12) Lak Sam 13) Yokkrabat 14) Rong Khe 15) Phan Thai Norasing 16) Amphaeng 17) Lak Song 18) Chet Rio 19) Na Khok 20) Ka Long 21) Nong Song Hong 22) Nong Bua 23) Ban Phaeo 24) Khlong Tan 25) Suan Som 26) Kaset Phatthana 27) Tha Sao 28) Nong Nok Khai 29) Bang Yang 30) Na Di 31) Don Kai Di 32) Khlong Maduea 33) Talat Krathum Baen 34) Tha Mai 35) Suan Luang 36) Om Noi 37) Khae Rai 38) Khok Krabue 39) Bang Nam Chuet 40) Tha Chalom

Photo1: the map of Samut Sakhon province and Thai-Mon people and areas where they live  
(source: the Journal of Voice of Mon, 2(8), March- April 2008, pp.7-8)

Samut Sakhon province is a significant Mon area in Thailand, where Mon people—Mon migrants and Mon-Thai locals—have maintained Mon culture and support Mon-related activities. Adolescent migrant workers are engaged in Buddhist-related activities. In Samut Sakhon, there are 51 Buddhist temples in Amphoe Mueang, 15 temples in Amphoe Krathum Baen, and 29 temples in Amphoe BanPhaeo, which arrange activities all year. The sense of belonging, which is an element of mechanisms that develop (Mon) ethnic identity (Dan, 2014, p.145), has been raised, as numerous temples have been governed by the Thai-Mon abbots. Given the deep relationship between those abbots and Mon locals and their roles resembling community leaders'

roles in decision making, migrants visit temples on their free days, joining religious activities and groups. This is part of the way of life for people living in Samut Sakhon.



Photo 2: Mon migrants participated in the Buddhism sermon given in Mon language



Photo3: migrant workers and their Buddhism-related activity in the temple after work

Groups are formed by Mon people in this area in response to the need for support and to maintain cultural values in relation to the Buddhist religion, education, and Mon culture and cultural values, while there are also various local community organisations providing support to adolescent migrants. When adolescent migrants gain insufficient support, such as educational support from the government or NGOs, these groups support and respond to Mon migrants' needs while providing information and an opportunity to engage in activities that increase the chance of expression. The formation of groups reflects behavioural patterns of individuals and the ability to interact interdependently and to share attitudes with group members and the public in order to get close to achieving specific objectives (see Sablynski, 2014, p.1).

Self-help groups formed by community members benefit the community. Formed and adjusted by local people, the groups can effectively respond to members' interests in accordance with the local culture while respecting insights of community members. Strong networks within and across groups bring about a strong community. The sustainable development of the community is possible when the individuals' potentials increase. Based on the rationale that the collaboration inherently links to learning (see Quist and Tukker, 2013, p.168), when individuals are stimulated to work in groups, they may not realise that they are learning how to work together, how benefits take place when they share attitudes, and how their confidence is improved. They may also not realise that they are receiving an opportunity to share attitudes; however, my study says that they are accessing that opportunity, and they are learning and gaining benefits from group activities that refer to the involvement with the process of sharing attitudes.

## 1.2 Outline of the Study

This study is divided into four main: Research Methods, Livelihood, Responding to Challenges, and Networks of Organisational Support.

The *second chapter* identifies the process of choosing and accessing the study site, techniques that I employed for this study, selection of participants, language use, data analysis, and ethical considerations. In *chapter three*, I describe the context surrounding the adolescent migrants to help readers understand how adolescent migrants choose to respond to different situations. The process of youth transition through the process of national verification and the choice to engage in the responsibilities of adulthood, the agency of adolescent migrants, work life, social context in Samut Sakhon province, and the links between culture, beliefs, and ethnic identity and behaviours can be found in this chapter. There are also references to adolescent migrant perspectives relating to 'better jobs' and 'hardship in the workplace' that reflect the reality of the context of Samut Sakhon province. Their perspectives lead to an understanding of how context and individual experiences are parts of the process of redefining terms like child work, child exploitation, and prevention of exploitation.

The *fourth chapter* focuses on situations and contexts in Samut Sakhon province that affect adolescent migrants' behaviours in relation to sharing experiences and attitudes. In this chapter, I discuss barriers in the public and the workplace, the ways in which adolescent migrants deal with those constraints, and the selection of space, such as temples and cyberspace, where adolescent migrants can express their attitudes. In contrast, the situations and agents that encourage adolescent migrants to share attitudes and expressions in respect to ethnic identity are found in the *fifth chapter*. In this chapter, I discuss the network of organisational supporters and their roles in response to migrants' needs and subjective experiences, particularly creating space for migrant adolescents to share experiences, to express themselves, and to get involved in the wider community.

The *sixth chapter* identifies the limitations of the sharing of attitudes among adolescent migrants: biases, power relations and cultures of expression, and the encouragement of the sharing of attitudes provided by networks of supporters in the community. The processes of self-adaptation and selection of space and activities and the creation of personal tactics as ways that adolescent migrant workers respond to limited opportunities are also mentioned in this chapter. This chapter explores the process of getting involved in non-economic activities, such as working in self-help groups and developing trusting relationships between adolescent migrants and their supporters to bring about the sharing of attitudes, ideas, and insights. This chapter also focuses on the benefits of the sharing of attitudes in such settings as focus groups. I also underline the sharing of attitudes existing in the community through group activities formed and arranged by Mon adolescent migrants and agents from the network of self-help groups, and the benefits of engaging in group activities. Further, I include discussions and guidelines for policy implications that point to the significance of cooperation with multi-agencies in the community. Pictures are attached to each chapter demonstrating the relevance of the contents of this study.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Methodology**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The selection of an appropriate methodological framework requires embracing the use of several methods based on the principle of 'listening to young people's voices.' This study's purpose is to explore how adolescent migrant workers in Samut Sakhon are encouraged to express and are limited from sharing attitudes about the following: child labour, economic activities and non-economic activities; how adolescent migrants and agents working with them (NGO staff and community leaders) share attitudes and outline the research design, the process for gaining access, and the selection of the fieldwork site. Then I describe the use of research methods and sampling procedures. Prior to the section on data analysis, ethical considerations involved with this research and the discussion of the approach are outlined.

#### **2.2 Research design**

This research examines the issue of child labour and its prevention. This research was challenging, as there is a shortage of adequate data-gathering efforts given the 'invisibility' of exploitation in the workplace, particularly in relation to the activities of adolescent migrants (see Van de Glind and Plateau, 2000, p. 6, 12). An attempt to integrate useful methods while avoiding prejudices and accounting for ethical considerations is the top priority of this research. As an application of a community-level approach, this study aims to collect insights, gather data on local issues based on a selection of samples or case studies, and conduct informal and formal interviews, participant observation, and observation within the community. In order to gain an understanding about economic activities, non-economic activities, the issue of child exploitation, relevant terms, and the prevention of the problem of child exploitation and child abuse, local officials (Thai school staff and the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education in Samut Sakhon and learning centre staff, community leaders, and NGOs) were interviewed in addition to adolescent migrant workers.

Over a period of time, this study also employs a methodology called a 'child-centred' approach (Myers and Boyden, 1998; Woodhead, 1999). It emphasises the capability of respondents to form views and express their opinions with respect for the diversity of thinking and action in which young people are involved. In this study, there is space for adolescent migrant labourers to share ideas on their work, resulting in a better understanding of both individual and collective interpretations. Group interviews are a tool supporting the participation of young respondents. As Children's Rights International highlights, 'The voice of children themselves must be prominent in exploration of what is going on in their lives – we must approach children as knowing subjects' (2005, p.27), focus group discussions conducted for this research reflect the process of sharing attitudes within a group of adolescent migrant labourers. When participants were encouraged to discuss particular topics about which they were

knowledgeable, they had an opportunity to share ideas, attitudes, values, and information to one another. I also embraced a mixed methods approach to minimise my biases (Bryman, 2006; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2006) and to ensure that all methods that selected were relevant to the research questions. These are:

1. How are adolescent migrant workers encouraged to express and limited from expressing their attitudes about the terms child labour, economic activities and non-economic activities, and the prevention of the experience of exploitation?

2. Is there the sharing of attitudes among adolescent migrants and between NGOs, community leaders, and adolescent migrant labourers regarding the terms child work, child labour, economic activities, and non-economic activities? Is there the sharing of attitudes regarding the prevention the issue of child exploitation between of NGOs and adolescent migrant labourers? How do adolescent migrant labourers share attitudes? If they are limited to expressing their perceptions, how do they respond to this constraint?

3. What are the benefits that adolescent migrant labourers gain from the process of sharing experiences, ideas, and attitudes about those terms and the prevention of the issue of child exploitation? How do those benefits manifest?

## **Gaining Access**

I contacted the director of Labour Rights Promotion Network Foundation (LPN), an NGO working with migrant workers in Samut Sakhon, before traveling to Samut Sakhon. LPN's director provided basic information about the various types of organisations and people involved with young migrant workers between 17 and 19 years old. LPN provides services through their consultation desk for migrant workers and a learning centre for school preparation for young migrants under 15 years old on weekdays. On Sunday, they host leisure activities for young migrants. However, LPN's learning centre was not the best place to meet 17 to 19 year old migrant workers (my target group) because there was a few adolescent migrants visited LPN's learning center and joined activities arranged by LPN. I then attempted to find other key informants in the hopes that I could identify and approach adolescent migrant workers.

After interviews with three Thai school directors and NGO directors, I met Lin, one of the staff members of the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education in Samut Sakhon. She took me to visit four learning centres working in cooperation with the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education in Samut Sakhon. Lin also provided significant advice about access to Mon groups and their activities. She mentioned the formation of the strong 'Mit Mon' (Mon friendship) group and a journal called 'Voice of Mon.' This information inspired me to find more contacts who knew Mon people. This would help me develop a connection with Mon people and to understand the community and Mon activities. I realised that getting to know Mon people in this area, who were the majority, would lead to the possibility of getting close to Mon adolescent migrant workers and becoming more engaged in Mon adolescent migrant workers' lives.

The third key piece of information came from ‘Susu’— a fellow student from my previous university. Her hometown is situated in Mahachai, her background is Mon-Thai, and her previous research on the Mon ethnicity in Mahachai made her a key person who could introduce me to significant people who could support me in connecting with migrant workers in Mahachai. Susu gave me two contacts, and she called those contacts to introduce me. When she suggested that she wanted me to call those people after she had made contact, it was not just her kindness that brought about a feeling of thanks for her encouragement, but it also gave me clues about the cooperative interaction between Mon people and the role of the gatekeeper. Knowing Susu meant that the outer gate was unlocked. Susu allowed me to get closer to the heart of the community, where I could approach people’s insights. She sent me to ‘Aye,’ a Mon man who brought me to his network and who provided me with a wide range of useful information. In particular, he suggested prospective young participants for this study.

Aye introduced me to other gatekeepers: community’s leaders, monks, parents, and teachers. Those gatekeepers provided support and information that developed my understanding. They made me realise that their roles brought about long-term benefits, as they provided me with an endorsement in the process of participant recruitment and in access to community information (Hennink et al., 2011, p.93). This was very valuable, even though the stage of accessing gatekeepers often took time, as they influenced the direction of the research process.

## 2.3 The Study Site

One of the reasons for the selection of the topic on adolescent migrant workers and the issue of child labour is my background and interest in child migrants, developed through my previous research undertaken in 2010. The selected site of my study was also important. I selected my study site, Samut Sakhon province, when I was sure that the study site would not bring about problems for my family. The experience of my previous research across the Thailand-Burma national border, without connections within the community, disturbed me; my parents’ worried constantly, which distracted my focus. Thus, I chose Samut Sakhon province, which is close to my hometown and where my cousins live.

The shared characteristics of having a similar background as the local people in the area did not seem to be the most significant determinant of the success of this study; however, it did bring about benefits. Being a Thai-Mon person myself meant that gaining the trust of Mon people/Mon migrant workers (who were the majority) made the initial stages of this study easier. Although I partly knew their language, being a mixed Thai-Mon person facilitated the process of adaptation. Mon people in this community might perceive that I possess a shared sense of belonging. Many days when I visited Mon migrant workers, who were called ‘Burmese’ workers by natives, I was asked the same question in their language: ‘Are you Mon or Thai?’ My key Mon informant, Aye, gave them the same answer repeatedly: ‘She is a Mon-Thai hybrid’. The sense that I was welcomed was conveyed through their smiles when they heard my stories from Aye. Their responses to my questions were natural. I did not feel any sense of anxiety coming from study participants when they knew that I was doing research and when they were asked whether their son or daughter would be my participant.

Thus, the selection of the study site based on the connectivity between people in the study site and the researcher is necessary.

The contact points that I predicted would provide opportunities to meet and have conversations with adolescent migrant workers between 17 and 19 years old proved not to be the most helpful. Thai schools, RakThai's learning centres, MWRN's learning centre on weekdays, or the LPN's learning centre on Sunday did not provide much access. I learned that, for the most part, many young migrant students under 15 years old spent time at those places. As suggested by Aye, the most appropriate time and place to meet adolescent migrant workers and their families was at their homes after work hours on weekdays and at learning centres, particularly Thai-Mon learning centres for migrant workers on Sunday.

Group activities involved with both economic and non-economic patterns and group discussions that encourage behavioural patterns of sharing attitudes and accounts of collective experience are my area of concern. Thus, the Thai-Mon learning center, Wat Pom, the place where I was a voluntary English teacher on Sundays, was the second contact point where I was able to meet and observe group activities. Apart from this place, temples served as other contact points, because many adolescent migrants participate in religion-related activities and national and local Buddhist occasions at the temples.

Although this study involves the issue of child labour, it was unnecessary to observe adolescent migrant workers around their workplaces for very long to persuade them to take part in this study. As one of the roles of gatekeeper, Aye supported me in the process of participant recruitment after he understood the research methods and the characteristics of the young participants: the young participants' age range and the ability to speak Thai. Because most adolescent migrants with experiences working in Thailand use the Thai language to communicate with Thai people, setting the specifications of the ability to speak Thai might have facilitated the research process, particularly because the fieldwork period for this research was very short. Clear details about research design, a rough list of questions, and the characteristics of young participants that I discussed with Aye prior to the visits and interviews contributed to a well-organized plan of data collection and reduced difficulties during the interview stage. Aye talked about my study and the key questions of this study to my young participants and their family in Mon or in Burmese before I interviewed with my young participants. Once I was thinking about the Mon-Thai translation for the interviews, Aye suggested me to use Thai. After he knew my interview questions, he believed that my young participants had an ability to understand those questions in Thai.

Recruitment by Aye was beneficial for me, particularly during the stage of self-adaptation in the site of fieldwork and when I only knew NGOs' staff members. I could access young participants and their parents when Aye took me to their houses in the evenings. I realised that this was a way I could create and maintain the relationship with young participants' families. I could get to know more about the life in the community and the relationship between Aye and the participants' parents. This was different from my previous study experiences. Aye and I were invited to have dinner and eat snacks with participants and their parents. Although many people stayed during the interviews, making their homes less spacious, this experience seemed to be welcoming



and comfortable for me, so that I did not feel embarrassed to ask their daughters/sons about the issue of child labour/child exploitation.

## 2.4 Research Methods

The appropriate research methods in relation to the issue of child labour are qualitative research methods. As Fahie's study (2014) indicates, research on sensitive topics should be conducted through qualitative research methods. This study was conducted through the combination of several qualitative research methods: case studies and in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, observation, participant observation, and the collection of documentary and statistical data. There were nine case studies interviewed, ten adult interviewees and sixteen young participants participated in group interviews. (see also section 2.5).

### Case Studies

The use of a case study as a strategic research methodology accompanied with several research techniques is beneficial, as it leads to the collection of strong and confirmed data (Noor, 2008, p. 1546). This technique is also necessary for researchers who require rich findings that reveal 'insight, discovery and interpretation' (Merriam, 1998, pp.28-29). Using this method in my study enabled me to gain data about individuals' values and strategic practices that were used as a way to protect themselves from the issue of child labour and the issue of child exploitation. I also obtained data representing a 'holistic view of certain phenomenon or series of events' (Gummesson, 1991). 'Great, depth and rich' information (Patton, 1987) contributed to the understanding of situations and issues of child labour and child exploitation, such as data related to the image of young workers committed to both economic and non-economic activities.

In this study, case studies are carried out through in-depth interviews accompanied with other methods of gathering data for the determination of triangulation: observation, document review, and participant observation. This allows me to investigate 'how and why things in the context happen' (Anderson, 1993; see also Yazan, 2015, p.138). All respondents were selected based on their involvement with the issue of child exploitation, engagement with economic activities and non-economic activities, and the process of sharing attitudes. I access the 'contextual realities,' including diverse life experience and working experience from selected adolescent migrant workers who possess the generally required characteristics of young participants and represented 'uniqueness.' The selection of young participants is based on 'the researcher's individual judgement' (Noor, 2008, p.1603). I underline the value of unique cases in the stage of participant recruitment. As a result of their potential to 'reveal about a phenomenon we would not otherwise have access to' (Merriam, 1998, p.33), nine adolescent migrant workers were selected as case studies.

I selected five male adolescent migrants and four female adolescent migrants between 17 and 19 years of age as case studies through observation techniques and based on suggestions by the gatekeepers. They were also selected on the basis of their



language use. A sufficient knowledge of the Thai language suggested the period of time that the young respondents had stayed in Thailand. The diversity of language skills does not cause difficulties in this study. Rather, it represents the uniqueness and the variety of the individuals' backgrounds, which is essential for understanding the range of complex experiences. With extensive work and life experiences varying by the amount of time they spent in the context, it was assumed that they had rich information and attitudes shaped by knowledge transferred by Thai schools, NGO training sessions, learning centres, and individual experiences. This richness would be beneficial to this study.

Apart from language skills, those who had availed themselves of educational support and encouragement from NGOs, Thai schools, community groups, and the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education in Samut Sakhon (such as educational support through learning centres) were selected and invited to participate as case studies. Furthermore, characteristics of case study participants, i.e., their age, gender, educational level, ethnicity, and current job, were considered. Regarded as my first priorities, factors of 'availability' and 'willingness' to assist in the research (Brewerton and Millward, 2001; Sarantakos, 1998) accompanied with parents /guardians' consent were noted at the stage of the recruitment of participants.

### **In-depth Interview**

The interview method offers an opportunity to access data about participants' subjective experiences, attitudes, and feelings (Kortesluoma et al, 2003, p.434). In-depth interviews helped me gain hidden insights, as they uncovered feelings and complex attitudes according to participants' experiences (Marvasti, 2004, p.21; Johnson, 2002, p.106). In-depth and semi-structured interviews, employed for all case studies and informants, used open-ended questions to explore life experiences, working life, and various terms relevant to the issue of child labour. Questions were asked about personal and collective values, norms, and practices used for protecting themselves from exploitation and to explore their perceptions about their motivations for sharing attitudes with friends, parents, and others.

I modified the interview technique and style according to the participant's backgrounds for both young participants (17 and 19 years of age) and adults. I also separately designed the information sheets used with young participants and adult respondents: the information sheet for young participants is less formal while documents for adults are complicated in structure and contained more abstract words associated with the clear purpose of research and interview procedures. Furthermore, the information sheet provided to young participants prior to the interviews contains details to improve basic understandings about research and procedures, such as the brief explanations for questions such as, 'What is research?' and 'What do I want to know for my study?' Illustrations included in the information sheet could help youth participants understand various sets of information.

Using appropriate language during interviews is also essential. As many young participants have a limited capability to understand abstract concepts and have different backgrounds in language skills, questions for young respondents related to technical terms such as child labour and the sharing of attitudes were translated into

simple words and sentences using language that young respondents can understand and use (Kortesluoma et al., 2003, p.438). I also asked them questions by explaining details about complex keywords and giving examples that might help them better understand when questions became more complicated.

## Focus Groups and Procedure

In this study, focus group discussions are emphasised. They generate a wide range of attitudes, information, and values embedded in the context that lead to an understanding of the diversity of individuals' experiences. The focus group method helps to achieve the objectives of ensuring those young people's voices are heard and that young people's participation raises awareness through a bottom-up approach, delivering benefits to all participants. This technique is also suitable for research that relates to sensitive topics and involves young participants, since this method is likely to be 'enjoyable' for participants and 'non-discriminatory against the illiterate' (Robinson, 1999).

In this study, focus group discussions are seen as a demonstrated model of the process of sharing attitudes. It is an effective method, particularly for topics relevant to the process of empowering adolescent migrants to have the confidence to engage in verbal and non-verbal expression. Without experience with group discussion, adolescent migrants may not be able to imagine how group discussions proceed, how they are allowed to share insights relevant to each topic of discussion, what the environment of the group discussion is like, how they can deal with situations that they are not accustomed to, and how they can select an appropriate action, offer ideas to the group, and respect and follow group discussion rules.

I intended to access a wide range of adolescent migrants' perceptions and to recruit young participants through the learning centre's administrators. Young participants were not part of my nine case studies. Sixteen young participants were introduced and informed about the study by an information sheet and direct conversations. Each of the groups had eight young participants. Adolescent migrant workers who participated in the *first* group discussion were students in the Thai-Mon learning centre, Wat Pom, who had never engaged in activities in the public where they were encouraged to express their attitudes or work with large self-help groups or community leaders. Young participants in the *second* group were students from the Thai-Mon learning centre, Wat Pom, who had been trained to express attitudes in public, having participated in public activities and who were members of the learning centre's youth group (Ramonya Youth Group). These youth had worked with members of self-help groups and community leaders. Each focus group discussion was set in a private room in the Thai-Mon learning centre, Wat Pom. In my role as moderator, I organised both groups and participants' conversations were recorded in the meeting room with written permission from participants. Each group met for approximately 90 minutes.

In the discussion, I used semi-structured interview questions and open-ended questions that required participants to brainstorm and propose ideas, such as questions about types of work in Samut Sakhon, a list of what they think constitutes harmful work, and activities that were most appropriate to each age group. I affirmed that participants

kept up with the discussions through repetition of questions and further explanation to support their understanding. I also took notes of their ideas and general key points on a whiteboard and drew small symbols that facilitated the discussion. Those key points and symbols brought benefits, such as guiding participants on how answers looked and creating a relaxed atmosphere rather than an attempt to use various methods such as 'ice breakers' to reduce stress among participants and generate group interactions (Kreuger, 2000).

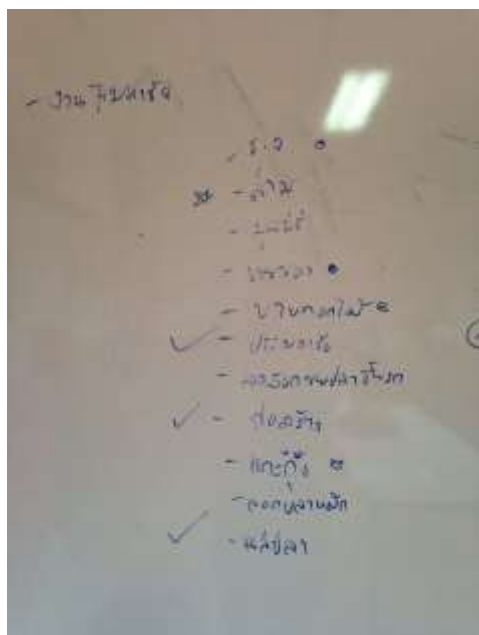


Photo4: note-taking ideas and key points on the whiteboard during the focus group discussion



Photo5: focus group discussion with a group of participants from the Thai-Mon learning center, Wat Pom

As a result of including students from the Thai-Mon learning centre, Wat Pom, who had good skills in Thai, the discussions were productive. Those who could not recall specific Thai words during group discussion were also supported to share ideas. When young participants could not explain ideas in Thai, they spoke Mon and other participants helped translate Mon into Thai. Having more than a two-month relationship with the study participants and the fact that the participants had a multi-year relationship with each other helped them feel comfortable and confident when they proposed ideas to the group. Further, when young participants helped each other by translating Mon into Thai and encouraging their friends to speak louder or to contribute, group discussions were comfortable for participants. These interactions showed the beneficial strategies adolescent migrants used for stimulate others to share their attitudes. Four main themes guided the discussion in accordance with my main research questions:

- Experiences of being encouraged to share attitudes and opportunities to speak out: when, where, and how they were likely to share attitudes with others

- Expression of attitudes about terms the terms ‘child labour,’ ‘child’s work,’ and ‘other young people’s activities’ related to both the economic activities and non-economic activities in which participants, their friends, their acquaintances, and young people engage
- Expression of attitudes about the ways to protect children/ young people and themselves from being exploited
- Benefits of sharing attitudes from group activities and participating in focus group discussions

I believe that the friendly atmosphere naturally stimulates participants to propose ideas to contribute to the group discussion. A sense of self-acknowledgement and confidence among respondents is also assumed to have improved. Apart from the benefits of sharing attitudes in groups, participants are able to acquire experiences from their friends in the group; they are able to absorb the group’s ideas about how to protect themselves from being abused, which is useful in their lives.

### **Observation and Participant Observation**

The observation technique was often used in my study, from the first day to the last day of my fieldwork, accompanied with methods of participant observation, interviews, and focus groups. This method is the instrument that helped me to access the ‘real truth’ (Desai, 2002, p.31), revealing actual people’s behaviours, including everything that exists in this context. I learned about social interactions, socially accepted behaviours, language used, and cultural values and norms through maintaining my relationship with respondents, spending time with them, and participating in their activities as an ‘observer participant’ and ‘participant observer’ (Walsh, 1998; see also Gold, 1958). I also gained new insights that were brought into the development of my understanding and details of interview questions.

I realized that this method was useful, particularly in the stage of getting to know the community and gathering contacts. I could see how adolescent migrant workers reacted to Buddhism-related activities and their different roles. I learned what adolescent migrant workers and other people did in their leisure time. When I could not understand their language (Mon and Burmese) when they were speaking to their friends and their parents, observation could help me identify the situations and the ways that I should respond to them. This method also led me to understand adolescent migrant workers’ interests, ways of life and activities. In particular, observation on Facebook gave me the opportunity to get close to them and their everyday lives. I could learn the patterns of sharing attitudes, including what they shared, what comments they shared with others, their background, and their leisure activities.

As interviews with adolescent migrant workers took place in their houses in the evening, observing when respondents were ready to be interviewed, when their family allowed me to interview, the privacy space, and times for interviews contributed to the success in the interview sessions. Regarding focus group discussions, observation techniques helped in the process of ‘breaking the ice.’ I was able to control balance in participation when, through observation, I found that some participants were

dominating the conversation. In response, I chose questions that stimulated respondents to pay more attention during the focus group discussions.

As a result of fieldwork related to 'a wider range of tasks,' observation enables the collection of a lot of data (Desai, 2002, p.42), particularly when I employ the method of participant observation accompanied with observation. Being a volunteer teacher at the Thai-Mon learning centre, Wat Pom, I learned aspects of adolescent migrant workers' lives and I shared my insights with them. I could also learn about their interests, and interactions with the learning centre staff members, teachers, and learning centre's managers. I also learned about their individual and collective values, situations that supported adolescent migrant workers to share ideas in the meetings arranged by the Thai-Mon learning centre, patterns of behaviour in meeting groups, and cultural influences.

As a participant observer of a different cultural background and with different values and viewed as a 'teacher' and 'researcher,' I was able to maintain neutrality. As time passed, the view of me as a 'teacher' or 'guest' who deserved to be welcomed with drinks, food, and service altered; I became a friend with whom they could share more insights, individual problems, and emotions. These experiences represents 'the sign of acceptance' that Ezeh (2003, p.201) refers to as 'sharing' or 'integration.' Their interaction with me as far as paying respect to a teacher was transformed into something more personal, showing that our relationship had improved.

### **Gathering Documentary and Statistical Data**

Collecting documentary data is the stage that required continuity. In my study, I started collecting documentary data when I decided to study the Mon language at the Thai-Mon learning centre, Wat Khok. During the Mon class, I collected students' lessons and booklets provided by my teacher and copied lessons from the whiteboard. All documentary data is essential for this study. I could completely understand the lessons that Mon people/Mon teachers gave to Mon students, and could definitely follow the ideas that were conveyed to the younger generations. I could understand why and how young people have developed particular patterns of behaviours. Following those lessons about Mon cultural values, norms, beliefs, and histories, adolescent migrant students had a chance to learn and absorb them so that they became part of their values.

Apart from the information on Mon lessons that I collected, I gathered 'Voice of Mon' journals, as suggested by a friend who was studying Mon. The contents are full of Mon cultural values and norms, highlighting the ways that people view problems in the context, and the ways that they view themselves and define their situations. These journals make me understand the process that groups of Mon people and Thai-Mon people use when they work together and share attitudes.

For statistical data, such as the number of registered and employed migrant workers in Samut Sakhon province, I opted to collect information from the office of provincial labour after concerns were raised regarding the strength and limitations of various other sources. The benefit of the ability to access the latest raw data, updated monthly and yearly by the office of provincial labour in Samut Sakhon province is the reason that I collect statistical data from this source, despite the unproven accuracy of

the numbers and the unclear presentation of age ranges. Although it is understood that the age group in my study is adolescent migrant workers aged 17 to 19, the number of migrants aged 17 to 19 and the figures of migrants who have reported their real age corresponding to the number shown on their passports has not been provided. Thus, it is important to refer to statistical data in some parts of the study as depicting general information about the migrant worker population. However, Interviews with questions about the real age of adolescent migrant workers were asked to avoid encountering ethical issues associated with interviewing participants under the age of 17.

## **2.5 Selection of Participants**

All of the young participants—nine case studies (five males and four females)—worked in factories in Amphoe Mueang, Samut Sakhon province but had different educational backgrounds and various jobs. The criteria for choosing samples in this study were characteristics of participants involved with young people's work and issues of child exploitation in Samut Sakhon province. They must be able to speak Thai and must be over the age of 17. For focus group participants, all worked at Amphoe Meaung in Samut Sakhon province and were recruited by the Thai-Mon learning centre's manager. Eight participants were between 17 and 19 years of age, and the other eight participants between 17 and 23 years of age. Participants under 17 years old were allowed to decide to get involved with my study. The manager of the Thai-Mon learning center, Wat Pom, gave consent as their guardian.

There were also ten interviewees (adult participants) who provided information that helped develop my understanding of how adolescent migrant workers were encouraged to and limited in sharing attitudes in schools, learning centres, and in the community. I selected these interviewees by following suggestions from NGOs and community leaders. These interviewees are from three Thai schools: the Luangphaet school, the Watsrisutaram school, and the Wansirimongkol school. Four NGOs were involved: Rak Thai Foundation, LPN (Labour Rights Promotion Network) Foundation, MWRN (Migrant Worker Rights Network, HRDF (Human Rights and Development Foundation), and St. Ann Catholic's Aid Centre for Migrants. Community leaders, staff members from the office of Non-formal and Informal Education, and the staff of learning centres were also involved.

## **2.6 Language**

In the community, it can be assumed that Thai language is used in the workplace, as migrants communicate with their Thai employers and Thai senior workers. Experiences of connecting with government officers, police, and dealing with the process of nationality verification and Thai media also make it necessary for migrants to learn the Thai language. Mon migrants are likely to use Mon language for communicating with each other. They have a chance to speak Burmese when they contact people from other ethnic groups in the area and outside Samut Sakhon. However, speaking Mon to each other does not mean that these speakers cannot speak Thai. Aye suggested that they (all Burmese migrant workers) were able to speak Thai.

He said, 'They've worked here for a long time. It is not whether they can speak Thai, but it is about whether they use Thai in conversations.'

Being sensitive to the diversity of the participants and their language use is crucial in my study, where there are language preferences linked to ethnic identity. Regarding the use of language in my study, after I learned that the majority of migrants living in this area were Mon (ethnicity) and it was assumed that Mon people spoke (and wrote) in Mon in daily life even though they were able to speak and write in Burmese, I prepared myself for different situations. I met interviewees from different backgrounds and with varied language preferences linked to their identities.

Before I moved to Samut Sakhon province and started doing fieldwork, I prepared consent forms and information sheets in Thai, Burmese, and English. Without ability in speaking Mon language, I did not prepare documents in Mon for Mon interviewees. I thought that the Burmese language was an official language that all migrants from Burma were able to understand. Such misunderstandings might have had a massive impact on my study but had it not been for Aye, my key informant. Aye pointed out that all documents in the Burmese version that would be provided to Mon interviewees could cause more negative attitudes than positive attitudes. Interviewees and interviewees' siblings might reject reading it or might be reluctant to give clear answers to questions I would ask.

A new decision was made after I observed language use between Aye and young respondents and their families. When young participants' parents spoke Mon or Burmese with Aye, Aye spoke Thai with the young respondents. I could imagine the possible conflicts between the researcher and the respondents' parents when the recipients of the documents were offered the information sheet and consent form in a language that was contradictory to their preferences. To avoid such conflict, I determined that I would use documents in Thai instead of Burmese before starting the interviews. Consent forms and information sheets in Thai were provided to participants. I hardly used consent forms and information sheets in Burmese, with the exception of the interviews with NGO staff that were unable to read Thai (See Appendix).

The language difference becomes the top priority when I contact people in the community. Prior to visiting the participants' homes and interviewing them, I would learn the interviewees' background from information provided by key informants. This way was not only beneficial because it guided me to prepare documents containing specific language that matched participants' backgrounds, but it was also useful since it helped me avoid some conversations that might be controversial to their way of life. During the interviews, I selected appropriate language based on participants' backgrounds, level of literacy, and culture. In order to contribute to harmonious conversations and interactions, I also used appropriate non-verbal language in response to participants' behaviours.

The level of the complexity in language is also considered in this study. I designed and provided different sets of documents and letters to participants based on the characteristics of the respondents in consideration of their language use (See Appendix). I neither made judgements about the differing intellectual skills for understanding complex information between adult respondents and young participants,

nor did I underestimate young participants' abilities. The reason for choosing an appropriate language was to facilitate respondents' participation.

## 2.7 Ethical Considerations

Regarding the ethical implications involved with young participants, seen as those who have 'less power than adults' (Van de Glind and Plateau, 2000, p.28), the right to participation and the voices of respondents are 'ethically important' (Boddy, 2013, p.78). In my research, young participants are considered as having the ability to refuse to take part in this study at any time rather than being exploited or being forced to continue to be participants by the researcher.

Further, young participants are not recognised as 'objects of enquiry' whose voices are ignored by adults, but as 'social actors' (Christensen and James, 2000, p.1; James 1998; Qvortrup et al., 1994) who have the right to participate and the right to assert their own voice (James and Prout, 1990a; Alderson 1995; Alderson and Morrow 2004). This study adopting a child-centred approach respects young people's beliefs and interpretations (Hendrick, 2000, p.58). They are viewed as social actors who have the ability to make contributions to society and socially and economically participate in society (see Scott, 2000, p.89).

In line with the necessity of the recognition of research ethics in the context of vulnerable groups, this research does not cause harm to adolescent migrant labourers. Under the approval of the Sussex Ethical Review Application in 2015, the study is designed to deliver empowerment for a marginalised group (adolescent migrant workers) rather than to do harm or discourage them from participating in activities that promote their capability and rights to participate in activities that support their well-being and safety, the provision of care, and activities that prevent child labour/child exploitation. This study is carried out to create an understanding of adolescent migrant labourers' experiences and values to bring about an inclusive society and lead to young people's development through the promotion of learning in the process of sharing attitudes (see Hugman et al., 2011, p.1273; Cox and Pawar, 2006, pp.294-295).

Details that participants shared during the interviews were not disclosed to other people involved in this study. Family members and/or visitors did not listen to the interviews conducted with adolescent migrant workers that occurred in their homes. Young participants were allowed to have a break when they required more privacy. Without these considerations, participants could have been harmed by being identified or overheard by third persons. Thus, the identities of the participants and attitudes of the participants were not shared with other persons in the community (Hennink et al., 2011, p.72).

Regarding the protection of privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality, the application of informed consent and the information sheet is designed to raise participants' confidence. Those documents explained that data derived from the discussion with the researcher would not be shared and data about the participants' identities would be removed from the interview transcripts or quotations. All respondents were provided with an information sheet and a consent document. Young participants' guardians were also given a parental consent form and were required to



return that parental consent form before interviews were conducted with young participants aged 17 years old. I read aloud all details on both the information sheet and consent form for both adult respondents and young participants while they were looking for those details on the documents. Participants acknowledged details about my research's purpose and the explanation about their involvement and the right to participate and withdraw their participation before the research commenced. In respect to the anonymity, I have also protected the names of participants by using pseudonyms.

Regarding age-related differences, cultural differences, and the relationship between the researcher and young respondents (power relations), including issues derived from the adult-young people role relationship, I anticipate lessening the power differential between young people and adults while conducting this research. I maintained relationships with all participants, making an effort to take a neutral position, maintaining a balance in my perceptions of information received from adult respondents and from young respondents. This is important in ensuring morality and responsibility in relation to age-related differences and cultural differences between and the young respondents and me. In terms of the risk of exploiting respondents, I avoided posing difficult and complicated questions and demanding activities that could potentially disturb the young respondents' work and study time, which would cause discomfort for them. When I had to ask questions that contained abstract words, I used various simple sentences and examples of situations to demonstrate what I was asking them.

## 2.8 Data Analysis

The data analysis involved in the issue of child labour requires skill and takes priority over the collection of the data (Van de Glind and Plateau, 2000, p.8). The perceptions of the meaning of work and activities in relation to the lives of adolescent migrant workers can be accessible through the analysis of young people's stories and experiences (see Christensen and James, 2000). For this study, I use a combination of analytical approaches: interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) and cross-case analysis.

In relation to the method of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), I identify 'lived experience' or 'something that will have already been the subject of reflection, thinking, and feeling by the experiencing person' (Bazeley, 2013, p.193) conveyed through interview transcripts. I generate themes, which I then develop into sub-ordinate themes for the analysis. The similarities and differences across cases is investigated (Bazeley, 2013, p.275; Dierckx de Casterlé et al., 2012, p.368; Ayres et al., 2003) to identify general patterns that developed into explanations about generalised behaviour.

Transcribing data in Thai and transforming field notes and documentary data sheets into Word documents benefit the process of data analysis. Transcription in Thai reminds me of participants' feelings underlying the narratives and answers that are conveyed in the space and time of the interviews. Working with Word documents, I can copy and paste text from one source into various documents that contain managed materials separated by topic (Bazeley, 2013, p.135), managing the data confidentially.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Livelihoods**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This study was conducted in central Thailand, one hour by car outside of Bangkok. Samut Sakhon province is a well-known industrial processing zone for fisheries. Fishing, industry (e.g., seafood processing, manufacturing, and frozen seafood manufacturing), agriculture, and tourism have resulted in consistent economic development. Samut Sakhon benefits the country owing to its position as a national economic hub. Employment in Samut Sakhon increases income for residents and can help combat local poverty. Samut Sakhon attracts migrant workers from neighbouring countries, with the number of migrant workers increasing to more than 165,436 (Samut Sakorn Provincial Employment Office, 2015).

The province is divided into three districts: the capital district (Amphoe Mueang), Krathum Baen, and Ban Phaeo. Factories for seafood processing and manufacturing, frozen seafood manufacturing, and chemical and plastic manufacturing are mostly concentrated in the capital district (Amphoe Mueang) and the Krathum Baen district. The Ban Phaeo district is the agricultural zone. The landmark of every province is a shrine situated in the central zone. The shrine of the Samut Sakhon province is situated in the central zone, located in the Mahachai sub-district. In this zone, significant places such as the police office, various governmental offices, the main market, the port, temples, and van stands, which directly send passengers to Bangkok and other provinces in Thailand, are found. Areas where factories are located are separated from this central zone; they are found along main roads and small streets connected to the main roads. Factories are everywhere, not too close and not too far from the central zone. It is not immediately obvious that there are so many factories or migrant workers in the region. The number of factories is as high as 5,727 (the office of provincial labour, 2015, p.18) and the number of registered employers is as high as 7,984. Because of the concentration of industry, traffic congestion is acute during rush hour every morning and evening (8am to 9am and 6pm to 7pm).

#### **3.2 Adolescent Migrant Workers**

'Migration is pervasive' (Cohen, 2004). It becomes 'deeply ingrained into the repertoire of people's behaviours and values' and 'part of the community's values' (Massey et al, 1993, pp. 452-53) or it can be accepted as what people do 'as part of their everyday experiences' (Cohen, 2004). Travelling from Burma to Thailand, adolescent migrant workers have different migration experiences. As a result of the aspiration to earn money, Mon-Burmese people who have never owned a passport find a way to cross the Thailand-Burma border safely. There is only one secure way to support migrants who want to enter Thailand, which is used widely among Burmese migrants and their families: through the service of Burmese agents who earn a living by taking Burmese migrants of all ages across the border. These agents help customers who have

few options to migrate to Thailand legally for work and who prefer to avoid confrontation with Thai immigration officers and the complex process of nationality verification. The first challenge in the life of adolescent migrants and their families seems not to be confrontation with police and the risk of being arrested as undocumented immigrants. Rather, it is the challenge of negotiating with agents who charge fees for immigration services (see also in chapter 4). To pursue their dream of working and earning money in Thailand, making an investment by paying fees to agents is a choice that has been made from one generation to the next.

Despite the anticipation of meeting their siblings in Thailand, earning money, and improving their lives (see also Juárez, 2013, p.7), adolescent migrants have limited options when it comes to dealing with agents. Many adolescent migrants' networks influence their migration decisions (see also Liu, 2013, p.1244; Curran and Rivero-Fuentes, 2003; Davis et al., 2002). Adolescent migrants' families make the decision to borrow money from friends to cover their migration costs. This investment is a decision that tends to bring benefits to young people and their families (see also Juárez et al., 2013, p.8). If the personal relationship with Burmese agents leads agents to trust their customers, agents may allow their family to borrow and pay back money after they begin earning income. Because they know each other, agents can visit migrants' homes in cases where they are late returning the money.

The experiences adolescent migrants shared with me about their journey across the border were different in detail, but they each helped shape my understanding of undocumented immigration. Among these stories were experiences of their initial entry into Thailand and the short stays overnight in hidden shelters that were secured and unofficially approved by Thai police. The amount of money adolescent migrant workers have to pay to agents is between 8,000 Baht (approximately £180) to 18,000 Baht (approximately £380) per person. It was confirmed by adolescent migrants that undocumented migrants have to take a long walk and cross the border with their parents or siblings and a small group of other migrants whom they do not know. They were delivered from one place to the next. They carried one small bag without a passport or any documents for identification, followed the agents and were sometimes left at certain meeting points depending on the rates paid and the agreement.

### **Youth Transitions, Status, Ability to Work**

Under the Labour Protection Act B.E. 2541 (1998) and in line with universal notions of protecting young people from exploitative work and the minimum legal age for employment, young people under the age of 18 are generally considered an inappropriate group to be permitted to work full time in a factory. However, the necessity to decrease their poverty leads adolescent migrants to find ways to change their status of being too vulnerable to work. Rather than being followers, adolescent migrant workers decide to change their ages given by misleading authorities about their date of birth, receiving documents with new, authorised birth dates that appear in their passports. In this regard, the categories of 'children,' 'youth,' and 'adults' are flexible, since they can be constructed and perceived differently in relation to historical and cultural contexts (Coe et al., 2011, p.2; Ariès, 1963; Boocock and Scott, 2005). As their age status can be transformed, they do not have to hide in factories and work—they are

officially employed, develop their working skills, and access higher-wage positions, just as adults do.

Regarding the process of immigrant registration, all migrants who are initially defined as undocumented migrants from neighbouring countries are allowed to register at the Office of Samut Sakhon Provincial Administration to get 'TR38/1'<sup>2</sup> and temporary work permits before the process of nationality verification and before receiving an international passport, visa, and work permit set for a particular period of time. Burmese migrants have to pass the process of nationality verification, either with the assistance of the agents who accompanied them under the permission of Thai government or through illegal agents. Migrants from Burma who are employed under the auspices of an agreement between the Thai and Burmese governments, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that started in 2010, have legal status. All migrant workers who do not work under the auspices of the MOU are in an irregular migration status until they pass the process of nationality verification, acquiring the new status of 'legal migrant workers' who are granted passports and visas.

Pursuing a new immigration status, a passport, a two- year-visa (with a fee of 500 Baht<sup>3</sup>), and an allowance to renew their visa to stay and work until 31 March 2019, migrant workers have to pass the process of the 'one-stop-service' registration at the Office of Provincial Administration. There, they receive a new document called the 'TR38/1', which shows that they are allowed to temporarily stay in Thailand and work for one year. Employers act as their guardians, bringing migrant workers to apply for the TR.38/1 document, showing documents of their business performance to the officers in the application process, and submitting documents to apply for work permits for migrant workers at the Provincial Employment Office at Samut Sakhon. Migrant workers must pass health checks and apply for social insurance (or purchasing health insurance<sup>4</sup> cards valued at 2,100 Baht<sup>5</sup>). With a temporary work permit, valued at 1,900 Baht (approximately £38), migrant workers are allowed to access the process of nationality verification. The registration for the national verification for migrants less than 15 years of age costs 2,100 Baht (approximately £42). During this stage, migrant

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<sup>2</sup> A copy of TR38/1 is used as an identification card for migrants with one-year validity issued by the Office of Provincial Authority where migrants are hired and migrant workers' employers approve their working status. In cases of migrants changing their jobs, the TR38/1 must be modified to reflect the new employer located in a new area that the migrant moves to. The status of an individual with a TR38/1 card is 'irregular immigrant.' This status can be shifted to 'legal immigrant' through the process of nationality verification, which granted immigrants a temporary passport and visa (IOM, 2009, p.4) from 2009 and 2014, and an international passport beginning in 2015. The migrant worker's employer processes the TR38/1 document. The employers who only employ workers with TR38/1 documents are legally employing migrants from neighbouring countries (Burma, Laos, and Cambodia).

<sup>3</sup> Or approximately £10

<sup>4</sup> Migrant workers who work on fishing crews, in agricultural sectors, or seasonal jobs are not allowed to get social insurance. Migrant workers who work in factories automatically gain social insurance, which is activated three months after the temporary work permit is issued. Migrant workers are encouraged to buy three months of health insurance valued at 650 Baht.

<sup>5</sup> Or approximately £42

workers may be affected by employers who may not be active in keeping documents updated and who use the strategy of ‘pay first and pay back by reducing monthly wages later,’ which limits migrant workers’ ability to quit and change their job.

After they receive an appointment card, those who have their Burmese identity cards are allowed to travel across the border for nationality verification and to receive a passport in Burma at the Tachileik district, the Myawaddy district, or the Kawthaung district. Migrant workers from Burma who do not have a Burmese identity card will be identified and will receive an international passport<sup>6</sup> after registering for getting a Burmese identity card and the document of residence registration (section, 4.1.1, Note Verbale no. 0307/14071, p.3). In order to get a visa<sup>7</sup> and work permit, Burmese migrant workers who are accompanied by their employers have to go to the service point at Samutprakarn province, Chiengrai province, Tak province, and Ranong province with their employers (section 4.2.1.4, Note Verbale no. 0307/14071, p.4). At this stage, migrant workers have to pay a visa fee (500 Baht or about £10).

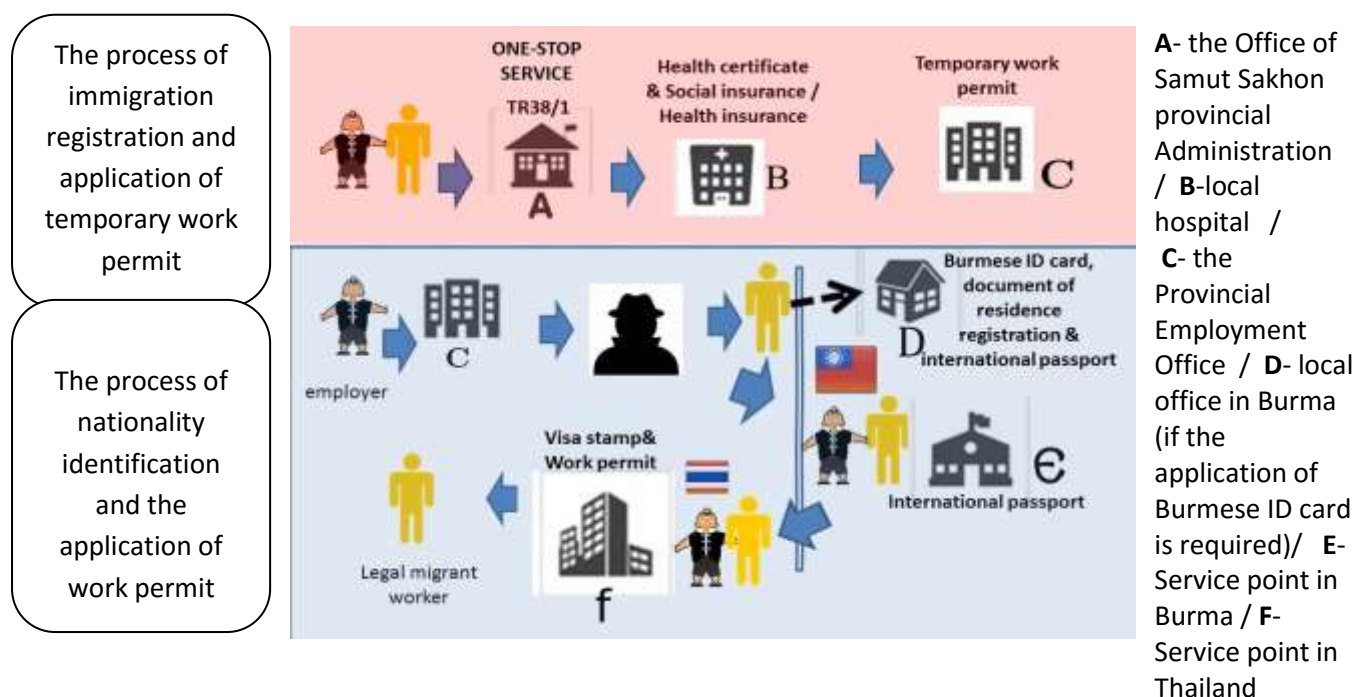


Photo 6: The process of immigration registration and nationality verification, 2015

<sup>6</sup> The colour of the international passport is red with deep grey letters on the passport’s front cover. In the past, there were temporary passport for migrant workers. The colour of temporary passport books for migrant workers is purple. The purple temporary passport was authorised for migrant workers showing their status as ‘workers.’ Holding the temporary passport book, migrant workers cannot travel to other countries.

<sup>7</sup> The visa will be valid until 31 March 2016 in cases in which the applicants are able to pass the process of nationality verification before 31 March 2015. Migrant workers are allowed to re-apply for the visa, which will expire on 31 March 2019.

These complex and time-consuming procedures are not favourable for migrant workers. Migrant workers are likely to use the services of agents despite being charged high fees. They believe that the prompt service they receive is the best way for them to migrate; they do not need to pay for travel tickets, they do not need to contact agents who they are not confident in communicating with, and they do not need to take days off for this process. This choice is the most appropriate for them. They perceive that agents would be able to help them in matters of legal documents and in attaining a new legal status, which results in a feeling of security while living in Thailand. Only a few of the adolescent migrant workers in Samut Sakhon understood the process of nationality verification and the procedures of applying for a passport and visa. Engagement with the process of registration, nationality verification, and passport and visa applications is likely to rely on the services agents offer.

Deficiencies in the Thai nationality verification system in controlling unlawful Burmese agencies and enabling successful cooperation with legally operating Burmese agents results in business opportunities for unlawful Burmese agents (see chapter 4). Further, the multiple systems of nationality verification are variable depending on governmental policies and regulations, causing confusion among migrant workers and leading to the 'unstable' legal status of migrant workers. This can be regarded as another factor influencing migrant workers' decisions to use the services of agents. Unofficial agents are widely accepted in Thailand despite charging high fees. This is because of their provision of prompt services and variable options dependent on the customers' requirements, such as passing the processes of nationality verification and obtaining a visa stamp, receiving legal work permits quickly and without difficulties from negotiations with employers, alleviating the need to take days off to travel across the border and apply for Burmese identification cards, receiving assistance in providing evidence of residence registration and passports, etc.

Because the legal age of employment and to obtain legal migration status is 18, these agents also offer the choice to young migrants to transform (forge) their age on their identity documents, to the benefit of both agents and young migrants. Because of their age, young migrants maintain the status of "dependent" in relation to their parents, but becoming independents and passport holders with the ability to independently travel across the border is a benefit that agents mention in order to persuade young migrants to hire them. This shows how acquaintances or 'weaker ties' influence adolescent migrants' migration decisions (Liu, 2013, p.1244; Palloni et al., 2001, pp.1295-1296). These actions of these agents transform adolescent migrants' status from young migrants to migrants who are qualified to work in the labour market.

Due to the lack of control of unofficial agents, the government is unable to control the quantity of migrant workers and redefine the characteristics of migrant workers; thus, it is possible that the issue of child labour may be related to the weak systems of immigration and nationality verification. A significant determinant of child labour is the lack of government control of the illegal services offered by unofficial agents. Child labour is also related to the transition to adulthood, which is mostly indicated by the experiences of leaving education, starting work (at an early age), marriage, and parenthood (Utomo, 2013, p.78; Juárez et al, 2013, p.7; Juárez et al, 2008; Grant and Furstenberg, 2007; Lloyd, 2005).

Adolescent migrants may experience the need to make the decision to change their age themselves, while their parents who see the opportunity for their children to work contact those agents on their behalf. In cases of the decision to falsify their age and move from youth into adulthood, which demands more responsibilities, an opportunity to gain educational support from the government until the age of 18 does not seem to be attractive for young migrants, who instead need access to economic opportunities and employment. From the conversation with Mona, an NGO staff member, I learned how adolescent migrants change their age and adapt to the circumstances that have limited their opportunities to work.

*'They are under 18; that is an inappropriate age for work. They have to commit a lie. If they do not do that, they will not get their passports and will not be allowed to work. Most of the factories refuse to allow them to work when they know that they are under the age of 18. I think this is their problem that they have to confront. They have to work in Thailand. If they only stay at their residence, they may meet policemen at their rooms who are visiting and checking rooms some days. Then, policemen will question them, like, 'Hey, you are not young. Why don't you have a passport? Why do you stay in Thailand?' If they are Thai children, they will go to school. They are not, they are migrants' children. When they migrate to Thailand, they do not know where they should go to study. ...They cannot attend Thai schools. They are too old to start grade 1 in Thai schools.'*

(the 27<sup>th</sup>, November, 2014)

### **Getting to Know Adolescent Migrant Workers**

Adolescent migrant workers can be divided into different groups. After being advised by NGO workers about the nature of adolescent migrant workers, age ranges may not be used to classify groups of adolescent migrant workers in this area. Instead, adolescent migrants are identified by the period of time they have lived in Thailand. Every migrant worker and employer can provide strong evidence of personal identification: migrant workers can identify their age by their passport, while employers can show that the process of recruitment cannot be completed without workers' identity documents. Without asking adolescent migrant workers' actual ages, there is no way to know how old they are. Glancing at their small hands, young faces, and physical appearance, there is no way to know the life of adolescent migrant workers engaged in the struggle to qualify for the market's labour demand.

I access new perceptions that reflect the nature of the context and the age groups of adolescent migrant workers. The perspectives demonstrate an ignorance of the actual ages of adolescent migrant workers and an invisibility of the issue of child labour. From NGO staff and key informant points of view, the ages of migrant workers cannot be clearly defined. The statistical data shows only their age as recorded in their passports. None of the (adolescent) migrant workers interviewed reported their real ages on their passports. It is hard to identify the young migrant workers, since adolescents are blended with the total population of migrant workers. With the evidence of their age on passports, as well as their individual experiences and responsibilities in their workplaces, all workers were viewed as 'adults'. Outsiders viewed people working in the factories in Samut Sakhon as adults, irrespective of their age, when they were thinking about adolescent migrants' responsibility and role in the community. There were only insiders living in Samut Sakhon—NGO staff members,

community leaders, teachers working in Thai schools, government officers in Samut Sakhon, adolescent migrants themselves, and their network who understand the reality behind the choice of age falsification. The invisibility of the issue of exploitation may derive from perceptions generated by the social contexts and are maintained by insiders. Because insiders have perceived that 'this is the way of life' and they are familiar with everyday life, the issue of exploitation in the workplace has been concealed. Mona, an NGO staff member, explained:

*'Regarding the ages between 17 and 19, we, HRDF, do not define it like that. We do not separate age groups of migrant workers or classify both a group of adolescent migrant workers and a group of adult migrant workers. This is because people aged between 17 and 19 years old work as much as adult migrant workers do. So, migrant workers aged between 15 and 20 years old are not called or classified as children and youths, even though they should be viewed as persons in the group of children and youths. They work like adults do.'*

(the 27<sup>th</sup>, November, 2014)

Despite the practice of youth changing a number referring to their age, the status of "migrant" remains. Adolescent migrants can be in a group of newly arrived migrant workers, another group of adolescents were born and grew up in Thailand, becoming workers. Growing up in Thailand and staying longer in Samut Sakhon, they have better skills in communication in Thai. Further, they are likely to adjust well, since they are more accustomed to the country of destination. Some of the adolescent migrant workers have experience helping their parents in their work in small factories or working to support their families at a young age. Many adolescent migrant workers' perceptions in this group are shaped in relation to parents' workplaces, activities, and experiences of working and playing in their parents' workplaces. Helping their parents work is a part of their way of life and contributes to occupational skills. It is also the way that migrant families sustain relationships.

This study reveals that adolescent migrant workers who grow up in Thailand are provided with better educational choices, leading to better opportunities and positions in the workplace. Education brings young migrants a better job, higher incomes, enhanced well-being, and the opportunity to access public goods (Yang, 2013, p.68). Those who pass educational lessons in Thai schools also have more knowledge of how to prevent being exploited and taken advantage of, while those who have no experience in Thai schools create their own tactics to deal with difficulties and to prevent themselves from being exploited (see chapter 4). Thai schools have been providing their students with activities that are co-arranged by NGOs, hospitals, and government agents, so adolescent migrant workers who used to study in Thai schools can get in touch more easily with NGO workers and can access provided in classes and activities that promote their ability to express attitudes (see also chapter 5). In contrast, these opportunities are not accessible to those who do not have experience studying in Thai schools.

Interviews with my case study subjects reveal that an opportunity to access education in Thai school relates to an opportunity to get 'better job'. 'Better jobs' for adolescent migrant workers can be also classified by conditions of work compared across several positions in the factory that offer the same rate of income, or 300 baht (approximately £6) per day. Trie told me that working in product warehouses that were 'less messy' and 'less demanding' could be defined as a better job. Mali believed that



working as a general worker was harder than working in 'QC' (quality control) or 'QA' (quality assurance). She perceived tasks in the position of QA or QC to involve easier tasks, stating that those who worked in QC or QA positions *'just use their pens and order workers to do tasks'* and *'write on documents for workers when workers wanted materials for work.'* This shows that language skills in the destination country bring about success, both 'in education' and 'in the labour market' (Dayton-Johnson et al, 2007, p.55; Van Ours and Veenman, 2001; Reyneri, 2004; O'Leary et al., 2001; Esser, 2006). Those who have the good communication skills are selected to work in QA or QC positions that require knowledge, ability, and responsibility for completing tasks.

Although these positions are perceived as jobs that are 'less physically demanding,' 'better jobs' can be defined in different ways. Sutat, one of the QC workers, saw his job as not being easy but requiring more responsibility. According to Aoon, who had never attended Thai school but spoke Thai well, 'better jobs' involved a sense of being accepted by colleagues in the workplace. Better jobs could also be related to 'high income,' which is regarded as the top reason choosing a job. When adolescent migrant workers receive an amount of money that is acceptable for them, they do not change jobs. It can be assumed that those who do not change jobs many times may be satisfied with wages they can earn and the working conditions of those jobs.

## **Working Life**

The working life of adolescent migrant workers mostly involves jobs in factories, working eight hours per day and overtime (OT). Because of the benefits of earning 300 Baht (approximately £6) each day for jobs starting from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. or 5 p.m. and the massive demand for workers, factories attract migrant workers who are officially identified as over 18 years old. The workday of some adolescent migrant workers starts in the morning, whereas others work at irregular times starting after 6 p.m. As general workers, all workers do tasks on the 'line.' Working in this position, each individual is set to work a different job as assigned by his/her employer. My case study participants perceive factory rules and tasks as 'knowledge' that they gain from their workplace. Those who have knowledge about work are expected to remember the factory's rules and act and work appropriately in the workplace. Each worker is required to pay attention to his/her tasks. Sharing attitudes in the workplace is limited in matters related to work and problems within the workplace. In such cases, a head member of the section should be the first person asked for advice.

OT work becomes more compulsory for migrant workers as the New Year season approaches or when massive quantities of products are ordered. Employers do not expect that their employees will refuse OT work. Generally, OT work lasts until 10 p.m., but many factories require their workers to stay at work later than 10 p.m. These kinds of workplace situations, limited knowledge about OT, and limited ability to refuse OT work influences adolescent migrants' decision to continue taking on OT work, which may lead to exploitation in the workplace. However, longer hours are perceived as profitable hours, especially when migrant workers want to collect a large amount of money to send to their parents in Burma. Many migrant workers' working days are extended, but this does not mean that they prefer not to work. In contrast, adolescent migrant workers see longer hours of OT work as beneficial, as it increases their income. They earn 56 Baht (approximately £1.12) per hour additionally when they do OT work.

Work that leads to high income is more desirable for adolescent migrant workers. Despite considering conditions of work when adolescent migrant workers choose their jobs, most adolescent migrant workers are likely to apply for jobs that offer more OT hours. Whereas many adolescent migrants choose a job that relates to the benefits of consistency and stability rather than an amount of money, others believe that peeling shrimp shells allows them to earn more money and they are able to work flexibly. As income varies depending on the products each worker makes per day and the rates paid for the sizes of shrimp dependent on types of processing, adolescent migrant workers can try to make up to 500 Baht (approximately £10) per day, whilst industrial workers gain income at a fixed minimum rate for daily work up to 300 Baht (approximately £6) per day.

As such, 'hardship' may not only refer to the conditions of work and long hours. Hardship in the workplace is defined differently and varies by the type of work adolescent migrants perform. Without understanding the context of young people's activities, one cannot successfully define and differentiate the terms young people's activities, young people's work, and child labour. In this study, hardship in the workplace is reflected in their expressions about their past experience working in Thailand. They spoke about jobs that they 'would not return to again.' Hardship in the workplace can be viewed as the conditions under which childhood is transformed into adulthood. It points to the young people's development and the process of learning, which brings knowledge and experience to adolescent migrants. It also reflects perceptions about strategies to prevent young people's exploitation.

The conditions of work that lead to hardship include jobs that are performed at irregular times, such as starting in the late evening, at bedtime, or early in the morning and that make the youth feel physical pain when they work. Once they've worked as a construction worker, as a shrimp shell peeler, and as a rubber tree latex collector at a young age, they say, 'I will not do that job again.' Aoon, who once worked as a young construction worker, described his experience about the job, indicating that he 'would not do it again.' The meaning of hardship in the workplace was related to jobs that caused extreme pain. The experience of working in the factory and doing tough jobs develops the ability to set a definition of hardship and creates individual tactics to prevent being exploited and abused. Adolescent migrants apply these strategies in the future.

Many young interviewees expressed their feelings non-verbally when they were reminded of their past work experiences compared with their current working conditions. Hardship from work can be derived from both physically demanding jobs and mentally demanding jobs. Mali, a 19 year-old female migrant worker from the KFFS factory, expressed thoughts from her imagination linking her life, work, and experiences as a general worker in the factory. The set of sentences that she sent to me revealed the tiresome nature of the job and the burden that she confronted every day after waking up and going to work:

*'We must be tired. We must work. We must fight with problems for getting money. So, I think work is the same as having mental difficulties.....when I worked at the MG factory, I felt both physically and mentally uncomfortable. Working at the current factory, I do not feel physically uncomfortable but I feel mentally uncomfortable. This is because my coworkers always say something that is hard to be accepted but I have to accept it. I am a new worker, having short experiences working there. Those who have worked for two or three years act like they are gurus*

*who know everything about jobs. I have to serve them. Only one way is to continue to work and be patient....'*

(the 5<sup>th</sup>, January, 2015)

Difficulties from work are also from the work atmosphere, the process of self-adaptation, and the relationship/conflicts with coworkers. These differ from the global ideal of definitions of child labour and the international and national regulations and policies with the adoption of the United Nations Protocol (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, Article 32), the ILO conventions on Minimum Age (ILO, 1973; n. 138), and the Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (ILO, 1999; n.182). These documents have maintained some particular features, including the concept of a prohibited age of work for children/young people and forms of hazardous work for children/young people. In this framing, work that causes physical and mental difficulties may not solely relate to types of tasks that require physical energy. Tough jobs include those that require considerable responsibility and skills. Sutat, a 18-year-old male migrant worker from MG factory, sees himself and his work differently; he mentioned tough moments where he had to give exams for job applicants, give training and be responsible for his tasks and other workers' tasks.

Further, the degree of hardship in the workplace can vary based on social relationships, organisational culture in the workplace, and the individual worker's ability to deal with difficulties in the workplace. Hardship in the workplace may not only refer to jobs that are performed at irregular times or that cause physical pain, but it also includes uncontrollable factors in the organisation. Mali indicates that the hierarchy in the workplace, which involves organisational power relationships linked to the circumstances of being unable to negotiate, shapes an individual's perception of work. There may be several factors defining hardship in the workplace or tough work, including perceptions of organisational structure, organisational culture, and social relationships in the workplace. Although perspectives about hardship in the workplace and jobs that cause physical and mental difficulties vary, this does not mean that all young workers should be prevented from working in all jobs that cause mental difficulties.

The minimum age of working children should not be an indicator of an ability of young people to enter the job market. Professional skills, work experience, and social networks may not relate to age. Adolescent migrants who start working early tend to obtain more work experiences, working skills, and supports from social networks despite their age being regarded as 'too young to work'. In considering this, those under the age of 18 who have success in dealing with stress derived from the social relationships and organisational culture in the workplace should not be expected to avoid fulltime jobs because of their age. An initial stage of self-adaptation in the workplace exists when ones start working; the process of self-adaptation can alleviate temporary mental difficulties in the workplace. The level of young people's development increases when they work and deal with situations in the workplace.

### 3.3 Living Together in the Shared Accommodation

Migrant workers are likely to choose accommodation that are close to their workplace. Apart from three-storey buildings, there are workers' monthly-paid residences surrounding the factories in neighbourhoods with fresh markets and temples. Every morning and evening I could see migrant workers walking between the factory and their accommodations. When the distance between their home and factory is not too far, migrant workers do not have to pay for minivan tickets for work.

Nurseries are also included in these neighbourhoods. Some migrant workers live in two-storey houses with two larger bedrooms, one kitchen, one or two bathrooms, and a communal space for dinner with their family members, parking their motorbikes, or watching their children do homework. Some migrant workers live in smaller shelters that are composed of one bedroom, a kitchen, and a bathroom. No matter how small the shelters are and how their accommodations look, migrant workers set a place on the left wall of the communal space for a Buddhist shrine with colourful lights. Many migrant workers put family photos or images of significant persons, such as previous Mon kings, around this shrine.



Photo7: accommodation in a factory



Photo 8: a nursery in a factory



Photo9: migrant workers' shared room



Photo10: a Buddhism shrine with the picture of the previous Mon's king(s)

Other rooms or shelters in the four-storey buildings are situated in areas where migrant workers are employed in peeling shrimp. I visited migrant workers and their children in this neighbourhood and found that the area of their workplace was connected with four buildings of workers' shelters, creating a small community. It seemed to be closed to outsiders. Every evening, the workplace was shut down after all the migrant workers left. When migrant workers finished their work, they went up to their rooms. In the evening I visited them so I could see their life after work. Many workers played football in communal spaces between the buildings. I found many migrant workers rested in the corridor connected with their rooms.

Rooms, shelters, or houses are shared with members of big families. There are many adolescent migrant workers sharing rooms with their parents and their sisters or brothers. Those whose parents and their families live in Burma opt to stay with their friends. Living together with friends in a shared room looks fun. One female leader of a Mon group and other migrant workers took me to see that it was not only two migrant workers sharing a room, but up to four or five female workers staying in the same room.

Couples can also share a small room. Since many of the parents of migrant workers stay in Burma while migrant workers come to work in Samut Sakhon alone or with their siblings, couples tend to work in the same factory and live together in a small, shared room. I could see that they also did Buddhist-related tasks together when they wanted to. Some housewives of migrants also bring outside work to their room. I visited one migrant dressmaker with Aye, who acted as my translator. Sitting in her room, I found that she had customers who were migrant workers visit her many times. She also

had a sewing machine, tools, clothes for sale, and many catalogues and magazines showing beautiful models with various patterns of Burmese dresses.

Since rooms are shared with many different people, parents of migrant children worry that their shared rooms are not safe and that they should not leave their children alone. Parents bring their young children with them when they work in small factories. If managers of shrimp-peeling small factories allow migrant workers' children to play around the factories, parents take their children with them. That way parents could protect their children from problems of sexual harassment that may occur when children are otherwise be left alone. Since some child migrants lack documents showing their legal status, taking their children to work is also a way to prevent them from being arrested by the police. Despite their experience of the long and tough journey from Burma to Thailand that they complete alone or with their parents or siblings, young migrants who have no identify documents are not allowed to stay alone or with strangers. The decision to take young migrants with them can be seen as both the solution to a stressful problem and a way of life that they cannot be freed from.

I could also see many migrant workers had elderly migrants in their houses. The atmosphere in these houses is quieter and lonelier in the afternoon. In the daytime, when migrant workers go to the factory, those who have little children leave their kids to stay with older migrants at home. Many parents select to work during the night and stay at home in the daytime to watch their young children. Many adolescent migrants may not have a chance to go to school, because their parents need them to take care of their young siblings. One day, Aye and I had lunch with an elder migrant and found there were many migrants at home taking care of house chores. I met these neighbours while chatting with this elder migrant while their children played with the elder's granddaughter. The elders prepared food for their returning sons or daughters. At the same time, I saw a migrant worker carrying a bag of fruits and vegetables back home and others preparing to have dinner with their families. All the loneliness at home turns into chaos during the Thai school breaks. When all the young migrant children stay at home, they stay with the elderly migrants and help them take care of the youngest children. Larger tasks seem to fall under the responsibility of the elderly and the oldest sisters who have to take care of their younger siblings.

### **3.4 A Bond with the Country of Origin**

Adolescent migrant workers' lives are linked to their country of origin, where their families and communities are based (Punch, 2014, p.21). Moving to Thailand for work, for many migrant families, is perceived as a type of investment that will bring returns. When adolescent migrants make a move with their parents, siblings, or other kin (see Razy, 2014, p.187), migrants and their parents pay as much as or more than 10,000 Baht ( approximately £200) to agents who lead them and/or their children to Thailand to process immigration registration, work permits and visas, and a passport for working in Thailand. This investment is expected to be compensated by good experiences and a large amount of income. They do not anticipate trouble, debt, or the sense that they will invest this money for nothing.

With respect, or a deep sense of gratitude (*Bun Khun*) (Montgomery, 2007, p. 416), towards their parents, particularly their mothers, the practice of teens or young

people sending remittances to their parents in Burma shows a link between migration and young people's development. Young people are not people who are left behind. When young people move, the connection with their parents and a strong sense of family responsibility is sustained (Punch, 2014, p.35) and their parents left behind are paid with loyalty. Adolescent migrant workers gather a large amount of money and send it home to support their parents as a way of responding to their parents who supported them when they were young (see Montgomery, 2007, p. 416; Mulder, 1979; Tantiwiranond and Pandey, 1989). Aoon, a 19-year-old male migrant, expressed the perception about his working life and a decision on how he spent his money that is linked the sense of gratitude towards his mother:

*'I do not let mom work when I know I can work. This is because I know that she worked hard and she was tired while I was doing nothing. When I was young, I did nothing, except eating, sleeping, playing. Then I realised this. I decided to let mom stop working. Nowadays, I work for mom ... For me, I do not get married or have a girlfriend. I stay with mom. All of my money ... I do not share only part of the money with mom, but I give it all to mom. Anyway, I do not know about others. For me, I give all the money to mom....'*

The bond with the country of origin can be also seen from the pattern of expression that relies on the hierarchy of the relationship. The deep sense of gratitude towards family members, monks, teachers, and those who provide support accompanied by respect and an acceptance of seniority leads to particular patterns of expression that prevent adolescent migrants from revealing their insights and attitudes freely. Since adolescent migrants pay respect to those who are older than them and those who have a higher status indicated by a higher level of education and experience, such as teachers, monks, and community leaders, they are limited in expressing their attitudes and are expected to share attitudes appropriately. Nam, an NGO staff member, described adolescent migrants' culture of expression:

*'For the most part, those who have more knowledge than them are those who Burmese people pay a lot of respect to. They are not likely to talk to them; they are scared of them. It seems that their sense of respect turns to fear. Regarding this, they will pay a lot of respect to them. Burmese people also pay respect to other Burmese. When they know that, for example, a person is a teacher, they will not feel comfortable getting close to them and acting like his/her friend...'*

(the 22<sup>nd</sup>, December, 2015)

Sociocultural values and the culture of expression have been sustained and transferred to the younger generation, even when they move to the destination country for work. The sociocultural values that 'children/young people should support parents when they grow up' and 'children/young people should be obedient to parents and those who are older' are maintained through the process of transferring values from one agent to another or from community leaders to society members. The days I spent in Mon classrooms with young migrants allowed me to observe the process of transferring values and merits from Mon adults to young people and from Mon community leaders to community members. I could also see the process of transforming abstract content to written lessons. Attending Mon class in the Thai-Mon learning centre, Wat Khok, I was able to access Mon sociocultural values that have been widely accepted by Mon people, both in Burma and in Thailand, through Mon lessons.



Textbooks I used in Mon class, seen as recorded social facts that are designed by a Mon educational group in Burma called the Mon National Textbook Committee in Burma, let me understand how Mon people have been giving lessons to their members. I learned about expected duties of children with respect to deep gratitude towards parents (and teachers), such as (1) *doing jobs for parents*; (2) *helping with household tasks when parents are doing household tasks*; (3) *taking care of parents and both father's siblings and mother's siblings*; (4) *performing religious merits and devoting those merits to parents when the parents are dead*; (5) *accepting properties and things in the household that are divided equally for all parents' descendants by parents* <sup>8</sup>(Mon National Text Book Committee, n.d., p.54).



Photo 11: page containing a lesson of 'five expected duties of children' ('Bun Khun') in a Mon textbook

This makes me understand that lessons may influence young people's perceptions and their expression. Since the children's duty is set and reflects a pattern of behaviour that people accept and expect others to follow, young people's decision-making, perceptions, and means of expression are likely to be influenced by those sociocultural values. Their values prioritising a sense of gratitude towards parents brings about an understanding of the agency of adolescent migrant workers and their ability to select an appropriate way of expression and decision-making that benefits themselves and their families. Because the sociocultural values linking the hierarchy of the relationship have been transferred to the young, the pattern of expression that relies on the hierarchy of the relationship has been sustained.

<sup>8</sup> Translated from Mon to English by K.Roengsumran, 2016.



## Chapter 4

### Responding to Challenges

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this study, adolescent migrants not only face difficulties in the workplace that change understandings of forms of exploitation, but their opportunity to share attitudes about work is limited in the workplace. Adolescent migrants also have to negotiate with agents who can shift the status of an 'undocumented migrant' to 'legal migrant.' They have to deal with precarious immigration status and can be challenged by limitations derived from biases and regulations expanding the conceptual perception about national security. They do not have a status that leads to an ability to share attitudes or express their ideas about work. Many adolescent migrant workers experience inequality in the opportunity to access information about their rights as employees, as migrants, and to be accepted as humans with dignity. They are restricted in their ability to share insights, show their ethnic identity, and freely move and live in Thailand, as the stage of adulthood is connected with an expectation of having a higher level of the self-responsibility. The opportunity to express their ethnic identity, their attitudes about work, and their daily life is limited.

However, reflections on experiences, solutions that they create by themselves, and the ability to adapt to the circumstances in their destination country demonstrate that adolescent migrants are able to identify and select ways to deal with people who give them trouble. Constraints at work and confrontations with police do not push them back home; rather, these constraints develop their ability to deal with problems. Adolescent migrants gain more confidence when they pass through the process of self-adaptation and gain support from the network of migrants. Different sets of tactics for life are also created and used by adolescent migrants, corresponding with their situations in different contexts. In the workplace, each individual uses unique techniques to prevent exploitation at the hands of senior workers and employers through the process of real-life-based learning, experiences, and cooperation in the workplace. The ability to turn disturbing situations into positivity in the workplace also indicates the capability to create harmony and productivity in the workplace and to develop a level of maturity. They also select to accept the status of being submissive when confronting power relations and biases in order to avoid conflicts with those who possess negative attitudes towards 'Burmese migrants'. Being patient, accompanied with accepting the status of being submissive while participating in activities with friends and family members, enable them to benefit from their decision to maintain a sense of social network connectivity and to increase self-respect through engaging in activities that they used to do.

Despite the limited number of spaces to promote opportunities to show their own identity and share their insights, adolescent migrants create their own opportunities to share attitudes, interests, and identity. Whereas the promotion of individual expressions varies dependent on the kinds of spaces, the ability to choose situations, spaces, and the degree of expression explains how they overcome the limitations of opportunities to reveal their insights, interests, and identities. They can

respond to difficulties appropriately by considering the degree to which they are allowed to express themselves. Activities relevant to the process of sharing attitudes and identities can be found nowhere but in their houses, in the temple, and in cyberspace.

## **4.2 Passing through the First Barrier: Domestic Systems for Achieving the Status of 'Legal Migrant Worker'**

All migrant workers who have the status of 'illegal migrant' have to pass through the migrant registration system, which is seen as the first device of controlling migrants' movement. All migrants are required to register with the province in order to get 'TR38/1,' the short-term permission to work in the province in which they are registered and that grants them the new status of 'registered illegal migrant workers.' Those who do not have TR38/1 registration are not allowed to access the next procedure, and their status as illegal migrant workers cannot be shifted to 'legal migrant workers.' As such, these workers will be deported. This system is viewed as a device to control movement and restrict an opportunity to access jobs in other areas. Since migrant workers, struggling for the status of legal migrant works and the permission to work in long term, have to continue with the procedure of nationality verification, they have to rely on one employer's name throughout the process. To prevent retaining the 'illegal migrant workers' status, which leads to a sense of insecurity and few opportunities to work in registered factories, they have to follow all procedures until they receive their passport.

The 'changing migrant registration system,' which grants short-term permission to work, also 'serves both to discipline and to control the workers, and to provide a cover for a much larger number of unregistered and more vulnerable migrants' (Pearson and Kusakabe, 2012b, p. 7). This registration system's function is to recruit and deport cheap migrant labour when the period of permission to stay and work ends. It is seen as a solution of the problem of the influx of illegal migrant workers since 1996 (Pearson and Kusakabe, 2012a, p.155; Chalamwong, 2004). Discouragement of long-term employment may prevent migrant workers from replacing native workers and from settling for the long term. It implies that the Thai government uses this device to support employers who are a vital part of economic development.

The procedure of nationality verification can be seen as another device to encourage migrant workers to adapt rather than as a mechanism to support migrant workers in becoming 'legal migrant workers.' This controlling device is designed to encourage migrant workers to follow domestic regulations and to keep their status updated. This device's function is also to select good, qualified people who follow the system of immigration registration actively, who are hired legally, and who are far from suspicion of illegal activities. At the same time, the procedure results in deportations of undocumented migrants who are not hired by employers legally, who have no proof of their updated status and permission to work, and who do not make a contribution to society. Those who pass the process of nationality verification and obtain an authentic passport and work permit are welcome to stay and work in Thailand. The passport can be seen as holding 'a particular symbolic meaning' (Colombo and Rebughini, 2012, p. 104). It is assumed to be a device that allows migrant workers to be admitted into

society. It leads to a new status that can create opportunities in Thailand. This identity document brings freedom to move without fear, opportunity to apply for new jobs, opportunity to gain educational support from learning centres, and trustworthiness when contacting agents from whom migrant workers require services.

However, the system of nationality verification is likely to be hostile to migrant workers, since it does not assist migrant workers in achieving the status of 'legal migrants' quickly, and there are complex procedures in the process of the nationality verification. Furthermore, this system promotes the opportunity for unofficial agents to take advantage of migrants who use their services. The process of nationality verification also causes hesitation about decisions that may lead to personal insecurity in their destination country. The procedure of nationality verification lacks consideration of how persistent domestic conflicts between the Burmese government and minority groups in Burma impact Burmese migrant workers and does not assist them in gaining legal status and to work legally in Thailand.

Due to the necessity of revealing their personal identity, such as their address and their real name, in order to pass the process of nationality verification, there are many migrant workers, especially those from other ethnic groups in Burma, who are reluctant to follow the process. Those who do not have a Burmese identification card, the necessary evidence for the process of nationality verification, are required to return to Burma until they can present the necessary documents. Revealing their name and address to Burmese government officers is not likely to be preferable for people from ethnic groups in Burma (see Pearson and Kusakabe, 2012a, p.156; Mokdewa, 2010, p.1, 2; Pichai, 2009). Anxiety and fear about the disclosure of personal identities to the Burmese government and the feeling of insecurity from living in the destination country results from the possibility of being pushed back to Burma and influences their decisions. Many migrant workers have found a way to solve this dilemma: they change their name and age through an agency in order to avoid revealing their real names to the Burmese government while still getting an opportunity to work in Thailand.

The procedure of nationality verification system designed by the Thai government without concern for migrant workers' background causes my suspicion that the government's attitude towards migrant workers is negative. The reasons for and attitudes behind the various strategies and procedures do not seem to be positive, since migrant workers do not gain permission to work through a one-step procedure and do not gain support in the process of nationality verification. Biases constructed and attached to domestic regulations and policies are reflected more clearly in the system to control migrant workers after they receive valid documents, whereas the government promotes a scheme of domestic development to support co-operation with other Asian countries<sup>9</sup> under the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) agreement. This can be viewed as a political tactic associated with a multicultural approach to immigrant integration (see also Grillo and Pratt, 2002). The perception of Burmese migrant workers does not seem to be positive, since there are various systems to control individual movement (see also Glick Schiller and Salazar, 2013, p.189; Gardner, 2010, p.52) and constant inspection of migrant workers' identification papers. Migrant

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<sup>9</sup> Countries under an agreement of AEC are Thailand, Laos, Burma, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Philippines, Cambodia, and Brunei.

workers are required to present themselves along with evidence of personal identification to the immigration office and pay fees every 90 days; they are also required to show identification documents such as TR.38/1 and an international passport to the police without advance notification (see also Pearson and Kusakabe, 2012a, p.156; Pollock and Soe Lin Aung, 2010). The system of controlling the movement of migrant workers through expensive fees seems to be established as a result of negative views of migrant workers.

### **4.3 National Security and Expanding Multiple Biases Affecting Everyday Life**

There are different regulations and strategies to manage recruitment for domestic jobs while considering national security. Apart from systems of immigration registration that vary by government, multiple strategies of immigration administration and local authorities are seen as the factors leading to the precarious status of migrant workers with identity documents and work permits. These administrative layers can be seen as factors leading to the failure of the qualification of immigrants who are supposed to be legally approved for work in Thailand. Various police checkpoints are scattered in Samut Sakhon in areas where many Burmese migrants work. The setup of different systems and processes for migrants from neighbouring countries may lead to frustration, pressure, as well as feelings of anxiety and fear since adolescent migrants are required to keep their status updated and in line with different policies that can change their immigration status. Their fear and anxiety about whether they will be watched and checked by police seems to increase when they have to pass police checkpoints on roads where their workplaces and homes are situated.

National biases are conveyed through these practices in the form of both recorded regulations and police acts. Since 1979, the year the Immigration Act<sup>10</sup> came into effect, migrant workers employed as labourers or as workers with low skills have been perceived as those who should be excluded and unwelcomed, with exception of regulations containing specific conditions supporting the process of immigration registration and nationality verification. The contents of section 12 of the Immigration Act convey a perception about the elimination of 'aliens who take occupation as labourers' has not been removed despite the changes in the government, policies, new immigration registration systems and nationality verification. It is not only migrant workers who do not have valid passports, but those who come to Thailand without skills or who are looking for jobs (those working or seeking low-paid wage jobs); they

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<sup>10</sup> In section 12, Thailand's Immigration Act 1979 has the contents relevant to the restriction of the number of immigrants: 'Aliens which fall into any of the following categories are excluded from entering into the Kingdom: (1) Having no genuine and valid passport or document used in lieu of passport ; or having a genuine and valid passport or document used in lieu of a passport without Visaing by the Royal Thai Embassies or Consulates in Foreign countries ; or from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs , excepting if a visa is not required for certain types of aliens in special instances. Visaing and visa exemption will be under the learn and conditions as provided in the Ministerial Regulations'; (2) Having no appropriate means of living following entrance into the Kingdom. ;(3) Having entered into the Kingdom to take occupation as a labourer or to take employment by using physical without skills training or to work in violation of the Ministerial Regulations...'

are likely to be under particular scrutiny. Migrant workers never increase their level of trust in the Thai government and they are excluded from economic opportunities. This is especially the case for those who work as labourers due to notions of controlling the number of migrant workers, especially who come to Thailand to work as labourers or who work 'using physical without skills training' (see section 8.1.1.2, Note Verbale no. 0307/14071, p.6), in legal devices and strategies.

Biases towards migrant workers that have been recorded in Thailand's Immigration Act have been transferred to all areas where there is an acceptance of the national regulations. It seems that there are no other ways for migrant workers from neighbouring countries to avoid these biases, since all officers are obliged to follow national regulations. As a result of bias in the form of national regulation, migrant workers are subject to the control of those whose enforcement roles are informed by these negative perceptions. Migrant adolescents are discouraged from sharing attitudes or negotiating, although they deserve to be admitted and respected as legal immigrants holding an international passport; they deserve equal rights and the opportunity to stay and work without fear.

The degree to which the notion of national security is widespread in Samut Sakhon affects adolescent migrants differently depending on government policies and local governors' administrations as well as local and national strategies. Thais became worried about a higher number of Burmese migrants on their land, provoked by police actions preventing Burmese migrants from taking over the province. The Thais' sense of land oppression was linked to historical conflicts and wars between Burma and Thailand. As a result, migrants were alienated. They could not access local support and they were attacked by negative attitudes towards them.

Adolescent migrants' expression of their interests has been restricted, since they have been perceived as people who lived mainly for work. Their ideas have been not valued. Regarding participation in events and ceremonies formed by migrants themselves, adolescent migrants' expressions of their ethnic identity was not fully encouraged. It caused a sense of insecurity and fear among adolescent migrants. Some were also embarrassed to participate in ceremonies that were meaningful to their lives, even though it increased their confidence when they engaged in activities representing their ethnic identity.



Photo 12: Police presence on Mon National Day in 2007 led to anxiety and fear among Mon migrant workers. (Source: the *Voice of Mon*, 3 (13 January-February), pp.14-17)



Photo 13: One of several police check points checking TR.38/1 where there were activities on the Mon national day in 2007 was another factor that caused the low number of Mon participants. (Source: the *Voice of Mon*, 3 (13 January-February), pp.14-17)

Adolescent migrants experience situations that increase their anxiety, which is derived from their status as migrants. They are challenged by polices and natives' biases. Despite the shift of local governors and government, perceptions toward adolescent migrant workers and their status do not become more positive. This is the case even though they should be respected as a part of the community, should be considered as sharing the same daily experiences that make an economic contribution to society, and should be recognised as 'human(s) ... having the opportunity to belong wherever one chooses or desires, no matter one's origin, language, religion or other kind of physical or cultural differences...' (Colombo and Rebughini, 2012, p. 102).

*'.. the policemen once told me that I had to have an updated document of Tor Ror 38. I must have it, he said. So, I'm not Thai. When I have knowledge about regulations and significant documents and argue with them, they think that I want to show them how smart or how cool I am. For me, if it is not right, I will not agree and accept that what they think is right. As others' perceptions, they may think that Mon people, Burmese people, who stayed in Thailand for a long time are likely to act in a way showing how they are smart, cool or overconfident they are... Sometimes when they know that a person is not easily obedient, they will ask questions that challenge that person to see how he reacts to those questions or how much knowledge he has. ...Mostly, Mon people and Burmese people are obedient to policemen. They can pay as much as policemen ask for. They think that it's better than having conflicts with policemen. Importantly, they are scared. However, it depends, but most policemen are likely to play a trick on us. They come and ask us several questions. They want to see some documents, see how many documents we have in our hands. Although they just want to ask questions, I know what they are thinking.'*

(Trie, a 19-year-old male adolescent migrant, interviewed on the 5th, March, 2015, 4.30 pm.)

The second issue that disturbs adolescent migrants is the disregard for their ethnic identity. This emphasises their status as subdominants and recalls various historical conflicts between Mon and the Burmans in their country of origin. Adolescent Mon migrants, who are the majority in Samut Sakhon, are affected not only by the biases of natives judging them as 'others,' but they are also affected by being defined as 'Burmese' that Mon people would rather be referred to as 'Burmans,' an ethnicity that takes their land and causes the deprived freedom. This shows how the definition of 'citizenship' can be shaped in different ways on the basis of understandings of membership and belonging. It shows how migrants' ethnic identities are likely to be 'challenged and redefined' (Brettell and Hollifield, 2015, p.165; Tsuda, 2007, p.247). While citizenship can refer to 'the relationship between the individual and the state', it can be defined as 'a more total relationship, inflected by identity, social positioning, cultural assumptions, institutional practices and a sense of belonging' (Werbner and Yuval- Davis, 1999, p.4). The difference in perceptions between natives and migrants about the knowledge of ethnic identity has an impact on adolescent migrants. Adolescent migrants are not accepted as different in terms of ethnicity in the host society. Some perceive Mon people as Burmese people, whereas others think that Mon people are not Burmese.

*'They call me Burmese (that means 'Burmans'). They don't care about it though. Mostly, they are not interested in those things. They think that historical conflicts between Mon and the Burmans have gone, but for me, the acts of our consciousness are for conserving our Mon culture.'*

(Trie, a 19-year-old male adolescent migrant, interviewed on the 5<sup>th</sup>, March, 2015,)

#### **4.4 Constraints in the Workplace and Decisions in Response to Difficulties**

Regulations concerning labour rights lead most factories to find ways to be free from being suspected of violations. One of those ways includes the provision of support to workers in accordance with the Thai Industrial Standard. However, many adolescent migrant workers, particularly those who work in small factories, are affected by factories' rules and distorted information in their workplaces and by the distance between employer and employee. Regarding the necessary information about working time, adolescent migrant workers believe that 'OT work cannot be refused', so they experience hardship from overtime work. Further, many adolescent migrants do extra work and think that they are not being exploited. As the form of exploitation changes from time to time and varies in different places, many adolescent migrant workers experience being exploited by senior workers who neglect their own tasks but ask their colleagues to work for them. Power relations in the workplace lead to the silence of adolescent migrant workers, rather than to them speaking out or negotiating with senior workers. Without knowing that they are being exploited, when adolescent workers, particularly those who are just employed and work as newcomers, are asked to 'help' by senior workers, employers, or colleagues, they comply. They are likely to do colleagues' jobs when their colleagues ask them for help. Adolescent workers are confronted with hardships derived from extra work that is not their responsibility. They have to do both their own jobs and the tasks of senior workers after being deceptively asked for 'help'. Regarding being exploited by senior workers, holding the same status as migrants does not result in a sense of honesty and unity in the workplace even though there are benefits (e.g., in finding jobs) from the migrant network (Dayton-Johnson et al., 2007, P.77).

While acquaintances are believed to provide news and information about job openings, like close friends do (Granovetter, 1973, p. 202), I argue that individuals may not fully benefit from the relationship with acquaintances (or weak ties). Experiences revealed in the interviews and focus group discussions pointed out that some migrant workers took advantage of other migrant workers who started working in the factories. Being new workers in the factories, they had to follow the work instructions given by senior workers. Because they lacked the information and experience necessary to classify whether tasks were for groups or for individuals, they were likely to be deceived and exploited by those senior workers. Group discussions revealed experiences of being exploited by senior workers. There was also a shared attitude among group participants that they learned from their experiences in factories:

*Chatt(male): 'When working in the factory, no matter who they are, Thai, Mon, Burmese, all new workers will have the same experience.'*

*Po (female): 'Workers who have been working for a long time know this well.'*

*Mind(female): 'They know how to do the jobs, but new workers don't.'*

*Po: 'They get in trouble.'*

*Mind: 'New workers don't know their jobs, or how to do their own jobs. They are worried about employers or senior workers; whether they will blame them and view that they are not responsible for their own jobs, so they do all tasks. They may not be brave enough to refuse demands.'*

*Peu (male): 'That's because they are afraid that they will be fired.'*

*Mind: 'They asked us to do things, and we could not refuse them. Some workers aren't brave enough to refuse them, so they have to do everything until they know their own tasks.'*

*Chatt: 'As another point, when new workers, particularly male workers, come to the factories, they will be asked for help. 'Please help me.' At first, that's ok, we can help. After we help them many times, we refuse. What happens next is that we are accused by them, like, 'This man doesn't work during his shift.' I know I have my own tasks, so I cannot help. At first, when they asked me for help, I helped them. When I helped them more often, they did not work their own tasks. When I refused to help them, they ran to my employer and told a lie.'*

*Koi (female): 'Such situations happen often.'*

*Po: 'Yes.'*

*Me: 'Mostly, your employers abuse you? Or senior workers do?'*

*Chatt: 'Employers ask them to do tasks and divide tasks for us equally, and then employers go. When employers stop talking, suddenly it happens.'*

*Mind: 'Senior workers want to ask us like employers ask. They are sensitive to those who have some free time from work. When they see someone who is free, they will ask for help. They say, 'Just a little bit, and it will not take too much time.' Doesn't take too much time, doesn't take too much time, I could be patient at first. After that, I realised they were abusing me.'*

*Chatt: 'Some employers blame us: 'Why don't you do your jobs?''*

*Mind: 'My employer just says what we have to do, that's it. She never takes care of us. She is busy.'*

*Chatt: 'My employer said, 'You have your jobs, but don't do your jobs. You do her jobs. I replied to my employer, telling her what that woman asked me to do. My employer said, 'If she asks for your help, you don't go for her, you have your own jobs' ... Generally, their tasks are not our tasks, but we have to be responsible to every task. It's not my duty, but it seems that I have to work more for them.'*

(the 29<sup>th</sup>, March, 2015)

Having conversations with nine case study participants subjects about the occasions when they were able to speak with friends in the factories also made me realise that talks with their colleagues and senior workers have been limited to topics involving work and problems that needed to be addressed. My adolescent participants realised that there would rarely be group discussions on topics about their personal problems and hardships affected by working conditions, extra working time, and unexpected wages.



*'We have not been allowed to talk with friends in groups, no, we cannot. Even for five minutes, we still cannot do it. They don't allow us. They may think that we will form a group and use drugs, gamble, or they may think that we will group up to sell drugs ... no, we cannot do that, we cannot form groups.'*

(the 21<sup>st</sup>, January, 2015)

The above quotation was Aubon's reply when I asked him whether he used to sit and talk with friends in a group. It seemed that the formation of groups in the workplace, particularly for discussing the issue of being exploited, was impossible. Difficulties that all migrant workers confronted were not likely to be shared or discussed during work time, except in consultation with the head of their section.

*'We had no rights. Living in their land, we had no right to do that ... just continue working, be patient with that.'*

(the 21<sup>st</sup>, January, 2015)

Aubon's perception was that status as a migrant worker meant nothing, except being expected to work for employers. This made it clear to me that different social contexts indicate the degree to which young migrant workers' opportunities to share insights about work, experiences, skills, and feelings differed. The complaints about the hardships of working life could be communicated with their close friends outside their factories. The acts that caused conflicts in the factories or delayed the process of goods production were not what employers expected to see.

## **4.5 Adaptation and Tactics for the Life in Their Second Home**

Challenges migrant workers confront are transformed into positive experiences. As a result of restrictive regulations and practices of the police that affect their feeling of security, many adolescent migrant workers learn Thai regulations. This challenge leads to self-development and the need to increase their responsibility. Adolescent migrant workers have an ability to manage their identities and adapt themselves to circumstances that encourage them to be active and to understand state systems. It is not only the responsibilities in workplace that grow, but there is also a growing responsibility that comes from the fundamental need to keep up with policy changes. They mature when they leave their country for work, as they have to deal with problems and complexities that may affect them and cause legal troubles. Those who have little knowledge about how to deal with the difficulties find ways to solve these difficulties by asking for support from their parents, siblings, community leaders, or monks who have are connected to networks of community leaders or NGO workers. They experience the benefits of migrant networks, which lead them to new information and help them to be free from the risky situations that may affect their status and cause them to be discriminated against.

Migrant adolescents create and use strategies to deal with problems. The creation of religion-related activities and, particularly, traditional activities such as the

Mon National Day, is seen as one of the various strategies that they use to deal with situations of being excluded. Although traditional activities lead to a suspicion of separatism, which increases negative responses in the area, setting traditional events that enhances the sense of self, an opportunity to share experiences of living with familiar people, and experiences expressing collective interests reflects how they react to discrimination, how they protect themselves from stress when living in their second home, and how they increase self-respect, dignity, and autonomy. The recognition of ethnic belonging can be seen as an act of resistance against exclusion and protection against menaces.

Another widely used tactic is being compliant with regulations or local authorities, and accepting that they have submissive status. Being obedient to authorities does not mean that they are losers or fools; it is not a complete sign of weakness. In contrast, paying extra fees to agents for the process of nationality verification and applications for passports and visas, paying money charged by policemen at police checkpoints, and avoiding arguments about their status and nationality indicate their ability to pass through conflicts with natives. This is important, because these problems can possibly cause bigger problems or impede them from being able to earn money continuously in the area. They use special tactics to deal with the constraints of confrontations with police and negative practices from officers. De Certeau (1990) refers to the tactics in the receiving society as the capacity to negotiate different situations by employing a variety of references. In order to increase the feeling of being 'at home' or feeling part of a community in the destination country, they have to select to act and to deal with different social contexts and constraints (Colombo and Rebughini, 2012, pp.94-95).

Power relations based on ethnic differences are not removed from society. They affect migrants' freedom to move, their autonomy, and make it unsafe to express their ethnicity in public (see also, Colombo and Rebughini, 2012, p.160). They select to present themselves as subordinates to avoid conflicts when confronting police, but they can be themselves and enjoy activities in the temple and in the learning centre without anxiety. As outsiders, they want to stay peaceful in places that are not their hometowns. Presenting themselves differently in different situations is assumed to be the best way to reduce stress in their daily life.

As an undocumented immigrant whose thoughts of and experiences relating to 'time, space, and a body in ways that fundamentally structure the basic sense of self' were affected (see also Willen, 2005, pp.66-67), Trie was affected by challenges in interactions with natives and police, revealing his strategy to deal with difficulties. The decision to be submissive and follow Thailand's regulations as a way to adapt to the circumstances instead of requesting the right to be accepted on the basis of personal freedom and an ability to make economic and cultural contributions (see also Stephen, 2003, p.28) and the right to claim the recognition of justice, equality and ethnic difference, showed his maturity and what he learned from migration. Trie realised that *'...Problems end themselves. None of those problems become big issues. Problems end after migrants follow what they are asked to do. It mostly happens like that ...'* Trie learned to be quiet and to pass through conflicts. In this way, patience helped improve self-development. He learned from the situations and accepted the Thais' negative perceptions about the status of immigrant.

In the workplace, individual experiences make adolescent migrants learn and adapt to difficult circumstances in factories. Education in school may not teach them to deal with the experience of being exploited, which can only be learned with sufficient experience in the workplace. As a way to prevent oneself from being exploited in factories, those who have more work experience would rather have their own strategies to avoid being exploited in the workplace. Conversations with my participants revealed the ways to prevent themselves from being exploited were unique and could not be taught to others. Aubon, a male 17-year-old migrant worker, shared his strategy to avoid of being exploited in his factory by hiding himself from eye contact with his employer and going somewhere else while his employer was nearby, while Aoon, a male 19-year-old migrant worker, negotiated directly with his employer when he was exploited.

Regarding the experience of being exploited by senior workers, observing situations in the workplace and justifying whether they are being exploited before deciding to help/not help colleagues shows how adolescent migrants understand situations and reasons for their colleagues' behaviours. These insights help them select the ways to respond to situations in the workplace. Many adolescent migrants opt to be patient and avoid conflicts in the workplace by providing support to colleagues when someone asks them for help. This indicates the process of making a decision and responding to situations that cause trouble relates to the way that individuals perceive and define their situations. The process of self-adaptation and support from their migrant network lead adolescent migrants to choose ways to react to situations and to prevent themselves from being exploited.

Migrant workers also display a capability for self-adjustment when they confront disturbing situations. Apart from the ability to adjust both in the province and in the workplace, there is the way that they can express themselves in this province. Despite being seen as a national security threat and being expected to work rather than sharing attitudes, there are different ways to share and there are some spaces that allow them to have express what is on their minds. One of the NGOs in Samut Sakhon clarified the reason that activities that provide the opportunities for migrant workers to participate and share attitudes are rare. Spaces for expression are neither in the central area of the city nor in the workplace. Non-conventional activities such as 'demonstrations, protests, or hunker strikes' cause more negative impacts for migrants than benefits, since host countries are unlikely to grant the right of political participation to immigrants (Zapata-Barrero et al., 2013, p.2, see also Martiniello, 2005, p.2). Police officers often observe adolescent migrants when they form groups and events that are organised by migrants.

When expressions about work and in public are limited, adolescent workers join religion-related activities in the temple in order to bring about a sense of the homeland and connectivity to their own lives. Expressions that are involved in religion-related activities rather than economic activities mostly take place in the temple where migrants can find calm places, where they feel free from struggles within the negotiation of their ethnic identity (see Brettle and Hollifield, 2015, p.165; Tsuda, 2007, p.247) and they can be protected by abbots who share the sense of Mon ethnicity with the majority of Burmese migrants (Mon migrants). In this regard, the temple where adolescent migrants join religion-related collective activities is regarded as a context that sustains 'ethno-religious consciousness' (see Brettle and Hollifield, 2015, p.166; Ralston, 1992) among young migrant workers, and adolescent migrants' religious

practices involve the exercise of the right to express individual interests, to present collective identities, and to preserve traditions. Fighting for freedom of expression may be not the best choice for them. In contrast, maintaining activities that once they used to do, such as participating in religion-related activities in their hometown, reflects their choice and a means to reduce the anxiety, pressure, and fear derived from confrontation with difficulties and biases in the destination country. Their choice is also seen by activities in temples. When they work with self-help groups in temples, there are various activities which promote the opportunity to share insights with their friends in groups. Then their voices are listened.

Mass media and the Internet have become part of adolescents' interests and perceptions (see also Juárez et al, 2013, p.8). In this study, the Internet brings new opportunities and freedom of expression. Internet enables adolescent migrants who are shy to speak and who keep quiet to become those who say what they think and who are able to show their identity without anxiety. I learned the process of self-adaptation, where adolescent migrants select new spaces that are appropriate for them corresponding to their ability to share attitudes in their second home. Further, the use of cyberspace among adolescent migrants shows how they pass through the process of self-development; they learn new information provided by their network and from cyberspace while adapting to a new scheme of global communication.

Online social networking through Facebook is accessed by massive numbers of members and visitors (Cain, 2008, p.1); Facebook is another place that adolescent migrants can express ideas and share their interests with friends. As the social network sharing culture of 'openness' leads to the possibility that Facebook's users will share perceptions (see also Yu et al., 2010) and Facebook's users are encouraged to share their attitudes in the online space (see also Pi et al., 2013, p.1976), and since one of the various Facebook features is for facilitating computer-based discussions about common interests and shared ideas (see also Din and Haron, 2012, p.1044), adolescent migrants can share their own perceptions without pressure. Many young migrant workers employ this space to reveal their personalities, particularly related to their ethnic identities.

Cyberspace became a place in which they were comfortable enough to express their ideas, as it enables users to present themselves, to improve their social networks, and to construct and sustain interactions and communication with other members (see also Din and Haron, 2012, p.1044; Cain, 2008, p.1). Although the expression of ethnicity is influenced by a social context (Brettell and Hollifield, 2015, p.165; Mandel, 1989) in which there are biases, restrictions, and regulations that thwart the freedom to show one's identity and to share insights, adolescent migrants select spaces to reveal and construct their identities by reflecting their ethnicity in cyberspace.



Photo 14: The picture shown on one adolescent migrant's Facebook Page expresses her own ethnic identity.



Photo 15: The picture shown on one adolescent migrant's Facebook Page expresses her working life.

Young Mon migrant workers revealed not only their ethnic identity, but they also showed their identity connected to their working life. In this regard, they showed how they were Mon on Facebook, where they can express information about individuals' identities (Cain, 2008, p.3). They also shared materials in relation to the Mon state, Mon music, Mon food, Mon culture, and a strong sense of respect for their ethnicity, while also revealing content relevant to their working life and experiences in the workplace. They showed images of accidents in the workplace that migrant workers experienced. Several migrants from my case studies posted photos of themselves on Facebook showing their friends that they were working. They were also likely to share their feelings, attitudes, and helpful information. Facebook allowed them to express good news or speak about new jobs. Thus, Facebook can be the main source for expressing themselves and obtaining information. It reflects adolescent migrants' selection of an appropriate space to express themselves. Instead of sharing insights about hardships in their workplaces or discussing the experiences of lacking equality with employers or friends in their workplace, adolescent migrants select the way and space to share attitudes and to show ethnic identity. They opt to share expressions in cyberspace.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Networks of organisational support**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

Apart from migrant social networks that influence the migration decision (see chapter 3) and have the role of transferring information and resources and decreasing risks in the destination country (see chapter 4), the lives of adolescent migrants are intertwined within networks of supporters in host countries. Adolescent migrants in the Samut Sakhon province are not only supported by their social networks in the country of origin and derived from sharing peer networks with natives who share their cultural roots, but they also gain support from agents working in the community. NGOs, self-help groups, and religious institutes, categorised as organisations and elements of a strong network supporting migrants in the community, play important roles in adolescent migrants' lives through the provision of educational support or skills training, which can increase the individuals' confidence in speaking about their own matters.

In this study, community-based organisational supporters such as self-help groups are revealed as powerful organisations that influence adolescent migrants' lives. These organisations have shared features and functions with agencies such as NGOs responding to migrants' needs while offering an opportunity to adolescent migrants to engage in the process of sharing attitudes by setting up non-economic activities such as voluntary activities and religion-related activities. Those activities arranged by shared-roots organisations like self-help groups and religious organisations, bring benefits to adolescent migrants by maintaining shared cultural values, supporting adolescent migrants in the process of self-adaptation and learning, and contributing to harmony in the community.

#### **5.2 Non-Governmental Organisations and Actions in Educational Support**

NGOs are perceived as the first agencies that support migrants. When education and occupational skills, viewed as human capital, become key factors indicating success in the labour market in the host country (Portes and Fernández-Kelly, 2008, p.13) and changes in opportunities to move out of poverty (Simon and Ward, 2010, p.7), all actors in the community see the benefits of the provision of educational support to adolescent migrants. NGOs that work with migrant workers have a primary role in giving suggestions when migrant workers confront difficulties with employers, and young migrants benefit from NGO learning centres. In Samut Sakhon, there are learning centres formed by NGOs and Christian NGOs for young migrants and adolescent migrants. There were four main NGOs providing educational support and establishing nine learning centres in different areas. On weekdays, educational support is provided to young migrants under 15 years of age who have few opportunities to attend Thai

schools due to the difference in the ages of young migrants and Thai students. On Sunday, there is an opportunity for adolescent migrants attending learning centres.

### **Building Closer Relationships: Trust and Its Benefits for NGO Work**

The role of NGOs in providing educational support leads to a close relationship between NGOs and migrants of all ages. Adolescent migrants who stay for long periods in the province, particularly those who attend Thai schools, have more opportunities to contact NGOs and join activities arranged by the organisations. Their status as students in school involves a chance to access protection and a supportive social environment. The relationship between adolescent migrants and NGO workers is also maintained when NGOs offer leisure activities attracting migrant workers aged over 16 years of age who stay in touch with NGO workers after they leave school. However, in Samut Sakhon, many adolescent migrants and migrant families are unable to access or consult with NGO workers. They cannot identify NGOs and NGOs' potential roles in their lives. When they suffer in the workplace, NGOs might not be the first agency with which they interact. Situations like this may turn the NGOs' social position into an invisible agent that is far from their reach. This shows how the relationship between NGOs and (adolescent) migrants influences opportunities for adolescent migrants to access support.

Setting the role and adjusting strategies are ways to help reduce the distance between adolescent migrants and NGO workers. Acting as a guardian, friend, or sister rather than setting the position as 'teacher', which implies a higher status indicated by a higher level of education, brings about the closer relationship between NGOs and adolescent migrants. Trust and deep relationships not only facilitate the provision of support; trust derived from the actions and setting the social position as 'friend' or 'sister/brother' leads to a more profound relationship between migrant children/adolescent migrants and NGO staff members. It also brings about 'reciprocal exchanges' (Hernández-Plaza et al, 2005, p.1156) of affection, resources, knowledge, and information. The relationship is the most significant factor of sharing attitudes and transferring content (see Gefen et al., 2003; Kumar et al., 1995, Quist and Tukker, 2013, p.170). Trust encourages adolescent migrants to be brave enough to talk, express themselves and their needs, and share insights with NGO workers.

In addition to establishing learning centres so that adolescent migrants can gain educational support, as strategies to get close, provide support to adolescent workers, offer and exchange trust, and create opportunities for sharing attitudes, NGOs generate projects. NGOs give adolescent migrants advice about labour rights and information about their services, and they stimulate adolescent migrants' participation in projects. These projects enable NGOs to access the community while providing help at NGO offices. As mentioned, because adolescent migrants who have been in Thailand for less than 10 years do not know NGOs, projects in mobility can be seen as NGO actions in response to different migrants' problems, such as health problems, drugs, exploitation, human trafficking, and shortening the distance between NGOs and some groups of adolescent migrants. NGOs may set mini workshops for sharing necessary information in communities. They may arrange entertaining activities for young migrant members,

such as showing off their music skills or other activities for young migrants' participation.

### **NGOs and Cooperation with Agents in Providing Support**

There is collaboration between NGOs and Thai schools and other agents to support young migrants, adolescent migrants, and their families. Multi-agency approaches can enhance the effectiveness of projects when there is cooperation between schools and social workers. Further, in response to social welfare issues, the private, public, and voluntary sectors take action for change in the community while minimising the need and dependence on support from state agencies (see Simon and Ward, 2010, p.89). In Samut Sakhon, the way to promote opportunities for young migrant workers express themselves can be seen when NGOs set activities in their learning centres and invite migrant students in Thai schools to participate. When Thai schools set activities, NGOs, hospitals, and governmental agents who provide necessary information about hygiene, drugs, and the issue of child labour are invited. This shows how the role of education providers from various sectors engage in various issues of community/preventive health (Pritchard et al., 1998, p.916) relevant to the concerns of smoking and drugs (Pritchard et al. 1992; Audit Commission, 1996; Prichard, 1997), HIV/AIDS, and early pregnancies (Plant et al., 1985; Pritchard and Clooney, 1994).

These agents get access to young migrants mainly in Thai schools. Only adolescent migrants who take classes in Thai schools and join NGO activities are likely to have knowledge of how to prevent being exploited. Adolescent migrants who never develop a relationship with NGOs learn how to protect themselves from friends and their own experiences. The provision of helpful information about the prevention of exploitation benefits prospective adolescent workers, but adolescent migrant workers who have never studied in Thai schools cannot get in touch with NGO workers and access the knowledge provided in classes and activities that encourage them to express themselves. It is not surprising that there is also a difference in their patterns of expression on the basis of the opportunity to access activities in the school. Adolescent migrant workers who have experience in Thai schools tend to be more confident in speaking out and sharing attitudes with strangers, while those who do not have this experience are likely to be afraid to speak. They can be submissive to others, because their culture teaches them not to argue with senior people and because of their fear of being sent back home.

However, due to the network of NGOs and supporters responding to migrants' needs in the community, NGOs gain support and exchange resources with agents from other NGOs and community-based supporters in order to access to the group of adolescent migrants who lack an opportunity to gain information and skills. Working for the best interests of young people, the network of NGOs shares beneficial educational opportunities. They often send young migrants and adolescent migrants to other NGO learning centres in order to persuade them to take on support, such as help accessing sufficient food, milk, and snacks as well as the opportunity to stay in a more spacious learning centre that facilitates outdoor activities.

Cooperation with individuals and community is regarded as a key role of support providers (see Dentato et al., 2010, p.325; Freire, 1993). When such cooperation occurs,



there is the exchange of communication that can improve relationships within the network of supporters and bring benefits to support recipients (see also Zhuang, 2009, p. 46). NGOs in this area have a cooperative relationship with community leaders when it is necessary for their projects to be set in their respective communities, while contact with adolescent migrants' parents is also necessary for NGO coordinators. The network of supporters is required when activities are needed to respond to recipients' needs. This shows that there is an exchange of active agents and resources within the network of supporters. I found that NGO staff members were likely to contact community leaders, or one particular potential agent seen as a coordinator, who could link NGOs before the date set for activities. The success of projects in the communities was less likely without advance notice given to the community leaders or persuading community members in advance to join activities.

### 5.3 Networks of Self-Help Groups

Previous research has revealed that immigrants mainly gain support from their informal social networks (Lynam, 1985; Leslie, 1992; Aroian, 1992; Martínez et al., 1996, 1999; Hernández et al., 2004). Self-help groups are regarded as organisational supporters built from migrants' social networks and possessing the value of strong ties rather than weak ties (strangers). In this study, apart from NGOs working in the community, adolescent migrants also gain support from another kind of social organisation naturally formed in the community on the basis of the migration network: a self-help group. Self-help groups are built in the community and by different factors, including spaces where joint activities are held (see Feld, 1981) and where there is homogeneity (see also Marsden, 1990). In this study, spaces where social contact and social interaction occur, and which can be developed into joint activities (e.g., housing areas or villages and workplaces), and homogeneity of ethnicity and religion-based interests result in the construction of self-help groups.

The formation of self-help groups varies dependent on the existence of the constellation of the network of members. Self-help groups can exist in particular areas or at the centre of the community. Since migrants select the area of their home in host countries in relation to their network, migrants who are the members of villages in Burma and stay close to their Burmese neighbours who migrate from the same villages are likely to join groups formed and organised by those who they know. It has been illustrated that 'system capital' is another significant factor that leads to the opportunity for individuals to form their network of relationships (see Stauder, 2014; Coleman, 1988, 1990; Putnam, 1993, 1995, 2000). When the community has sets of social control, trust, and collective norms, it is likely to have community-based groups in the community.

Spaces where there is a shared culture, norms, and trust may also be referred to as areas where there is the homogeneity of ethnicity and religion. Speaking with a Mon community leader, I learned that each individual in Burma joins Buddhism-related activities in a temple close to their home. Similarly, in Mahachai, adolescent migrant groups are likely to volunteer for activities in particular communities or temples. When social context influences adolescent migrants' behaviours and interests regarding the forming of groups, key factors of self-help group construction include space where there

are jointed activities, system capital, and homogeneity. These factors influence and maintain the adolescent migrants' interest with respect to the construction of self-help groups, and may be reasons why various groups are formed in communities with low levels of individuality. This includes self-help groups formed in workplaces with opportunities for group member contact and interaction. Adolescent migrants are likely to be influenced to get involved with self-help groups when they interact with colleagues who take part in such groups. The homogeneity of the individuals' interest in voluntary work results in the construction of groups.

Self-help groups can be found in different sizes in Samut Sakhon. In Samut Sakhon, there are about 20 self-help groups established and organised by several Mon migrants accompanied by young Mon migrants, through coordination with the Mon Association of Thailand. While small self-help groups have one leader who is accepted by the organisations' members and two or three leader's assistants, complex self-help groups consist of a leader, a finance administrator, a coordinator, a secretary, and members—as many as 50 to 100 migrant workers. There are also minor-structured clusters of the network formed in the workplace viewed as 'small units' of the self-help group who work to support group members working in the same workplace.

### **Community-based Supporters: Self-help Groups and Their Roles**

Self-help groups not only show the role of community and networks in facilitating the process of settlement and self-adaptation (Brettell, 2015, p.158; Wilson, 1994, p.275; Berry, 1997; Shen and Takeuchi, 2001), but they also indicate how migrants retain 'ties to home' (see also O'Reilly, 2012, p.42). The formation of structural communities or organisations like self-help groups also increases reflexivity (see Colombo and Rebughini, 2012, p.96); it shows how people find ways to maintain relationships within the network. Forming self-help groups reflects the practice of offering opportunities to access resources and better opportunities without breaking rules and domestic expectations while maintaining belonging. Further, transforming migrant social networks into community-based support providers can be regarded as the way that migrants strengthen their social networks and maintain their culture, which is necessary when migrants have to adapt to changes and challenges in the destination country. Trie told me that forming groups for activities like this was one of the experiences that made him think of the practices of Mon people in his hometown. Forming groups could be a way of replicating 'the feeling of being at home.' I learned from Trie that because self-help groups brought benefits to them, Mon migrants continued forming groups and creating activities despite changes to the places where they could host the activities:

*'In factories, there are many groups of male-female young migrants, as I can see. In the villages of Mon people, it is apparent that these groups are formed and those groups are also formed. Most of their groups are Mon. For Mon groups, they have group names. Groups members working for religion-related aims towards help tasks related to Buddhism activities ... Mon people are likely to work in groups. We can see groups of male-female young migrants help tasks in the temple. Those groups can be seen as adolescent migrants' groups. There are many groups formed by Mon people. In Burma, at my village, there are also Mon groups like these. They work in different positions: the leader, the second-leader, and so on. Those who migrate from the same village in Burma may give a sum of money to their groups (in Thailand) for supporting the budget*

*to establish a temple in Burma. The villagers in Burma also support their money for this budget. They help and organise their groups on their own... The Burmese groups are hardly seen. Mostly, Mon people tend to stay in groups.'*

(the 15<sup>th</sup>, February, 2015)

### **Reflexivity and Strategies in Response to Adolescent Migrants' Needs**

Self-help groups can be seen in temples where Mon migrants can independently gather and join in Buddhism-related activities. These activities use a symbol showing unity and homogeneity in respect to ethnicity and members' interests. It provides a sense of teamwork when self-help group members wear t-shirts with particular and unique designs that are created for special occasions and events (see Baonerd, 2008, p.18). Further, a division of work in relation to the organisations' missions can help individuals learn the structure of organisations and gain benefits from applying their knowledge and creating work plans based on this knowledge.



Photo 16: adolescent migrants as members of self- help group and Buddhism- related activities

Regarding self-help groups' missions, each group is set for different mission but aims to provide support to migrants in the local community (see also Brettell, 2015, p.160), such as educational support, health support, cultural conservations, and services for consultation. Self-help groups form to serve migrants in 'the process of settlement and adaptation.' In considering features and functions of self-help groups, this kind of

social organisation has the potential to help as much as NGOs in response to migrants' needs. Once adolescent migrants have limited language skills, they are supported by various self-help groups that work to provide language instruction in the three languages (Mon, Thai, and English) necessary for their life in Thailand. Such instruction is available in five Thai-Mon learning centres, even though there is a variety of learning centre options for young migrants. There are also larger self-help groups carrying out skills training projects for migrants and providing advisory support for those who have a little knowledge of legal documents and regulations.

Self-help groups do not just work in response to migrants' needs, which would be indicated by various projects being formed at different times; rather, these groups go beyond solving the problems of migrants. Self-help groups share views and experiences, which improves the quantity and quality of interpersonal relationships within self-help groups on the basis of shared status and 'settlement culture' (see also Berry, 1997; Shen and Takeuchi, 2001). These relationships lead to the positive changes in individuals' adjustment, mental health and well-being (see also Hernández et al., 2006, p. 1154; Aroian, 1992; Leslie, 1992). Group members deeply understand the problems of migrant workers, their culture, and ways of life, since they are workers themselves and share roots with Mon migrants. While private actors such as NGOs promote educational opportunities, seen as a way to prevent child exploitation, there are the prevention strategies created by self-help groups. Self-help groups employ different strategies that may be far from the global ideal of the prevention child labour. These groups benefit from the relationships of the migrant network and the close relationships within their groups. In the process of adaptation to the working environment, group meetings are likely to bring opportunities for adolescent migrants to share individual problems and work stress. Networks can diminish an experience of being exploited in the workplace through the process of sharing attitudes about the prevention of exploitation, particularly for those who do not have a chance to access an education in Thai schools.

Regarding support for the expression of ideas among adolescent workers, self-help groups encourage adolescent migrant workers to express themselves through the opportunity to work in groups. Self-help groups also provide a working atmosphere that supports group members in learning how to work in groups with teams. Working in groups, adolescent migrants can also express themselves to the public; they are provided with the chance to let others know their interests and to communicate about activities that they enjoy in their free time. Self-help groups are another influencing factor of sharing attitudes and collaboration that is unlikely to be seen in migrants' workplaces. Self-help groups organise many religious activities that connect to adolescent migrants' backgrounds and interests. Since migrant workers can join groups anytime and there are no fixed characteristics of new group members who want to volunteer, adolescent migrants do not lack the opportunity to share their attitudes, either in the group or in public. When self-help groups create an atmosphere that facilitates individuals' expression, and adolescent migrants are encouraged to have open communication within the community or are allowed to take part in collaborative activities, individuals are likely to share views and experiences and exhibit collaborative behaviour (see Sveiby and Simons, 2002, p.421). Self-help groups can bring about an increasing tendency of sharing attitudes among adolescent migrants.

## **The Prototype of Community-based Education and Encouragement to Learn the Process of Sharing Attitudes**

Since there are no rigid features of fully qualified educational services provided by local educational authorities and the structure and function of educational promotion services flexible (Pritchard et al., 1998, p.916; Halford, 1994; NASWE, 1996), it is not surprising that there are many private sector educational services. Apart from educational support provided by NGOs, there is a variety of large self-help groups providing educational support to adolescent migrants in the form of learning centres. Regarding the number of learning centres formed and organised by Mon groups, there are mainly five the Thai-Mon learning centres. Thai, English, and Mon classes are available in these learning centres, provided every Sunday—the single day per week that migrants are free from work. Educational support providers of Thai-Mon learning centres maintain crucial roles in promoting ‘cultural literacy’ (Russell and White, 2002, p.636) and cultural awareness (Barsky, 1995; Christensen, 1992, 1989). Thai-Mon learning centres support adolescent migrants in learning the Mon language and provide year-round activities that maintain the sense of Mon culture and respect for Mon ethnicity. Compulsory Mon language courses in Thai-Mon learning centres reflect how self-help groups and Mon community leaders maintain and transfer Mon culture, values, and beliefs to the young.

The unique education provided by self-help groups is seen in the creation of unique curriculum, educational activities, and schedules for learners in the Thai-Mon learning centres. Since adolescent migrants do not have experience studying Thai and Mon languages and have limited free time per week, education for adolescent migrants in Thai-Mon learning centres is set differently. Not every session in Thai-Mon learning centres embraces the teaching techniques of a child-centred approach; there are few activities in the classroom for learners. Instead, adolescent migrants are encouraged to work in groups, supporting the community.

‘Ramonya Youth Organisation Thailand’ is a group organised by and composed of adolescent migrant members studying at the Thai-Mon learning centre, Wat Pom. Rather than the flexible aims of most organisations, this group has been directed to promote three priorities, and there are five divisions tasked with executing these priorities under the support and advice of senior administrative members and adolescent migrant administrative members. The priorities that this organisation aims to promote are cultural conservation, media, and educational promotion, each of which has a division assigned to carry the work forward. Two additional divisions are set for administration: the coordinating division and the data recording division.



Photo 17: adolescent migrants having a meeting with the Ramonya Youth Organization's members at the Thai-Mon learning center, Wat Pom

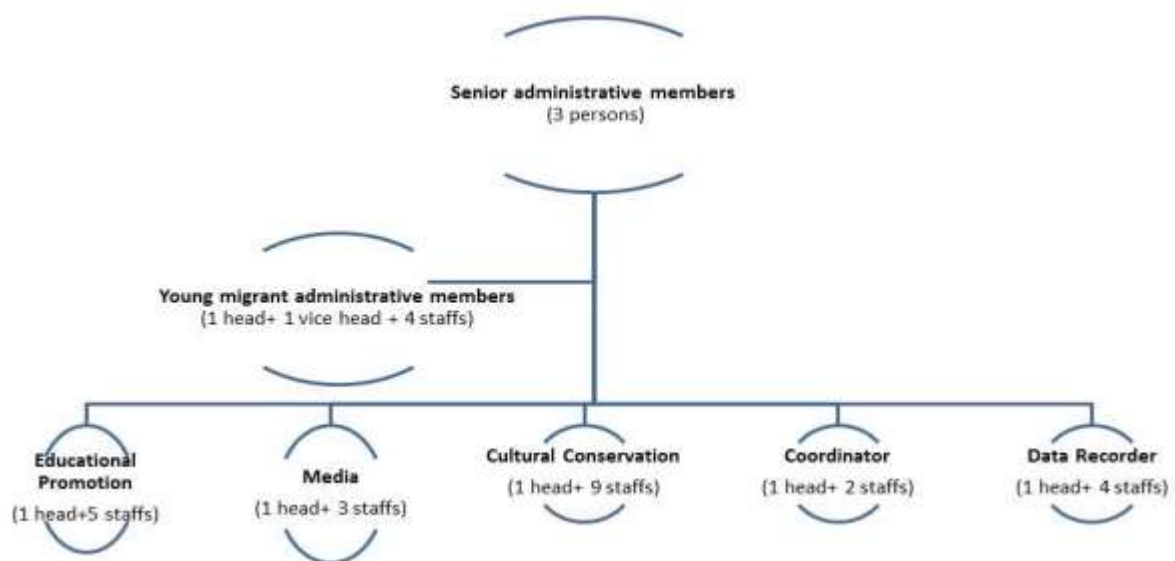


Photo 18: the chart of 'Ramonya Youth Organization Thailand' aiming to promote the dimensions of education, media and cultural conservation by five divisions of organization

Working in each sector, adolescent migrants who are the members of this organisation learn the process of sharing attitudes and working in a group. In the division of educational promotion, one leader and five adolescent migrant members have the responsibility to teach basic Thai or Mon languages to adolescent migrants in the Thai-Mon learning centre, Wat Pom, when there is a shortage or absence of Thai teachers. The media section's three members and leader work as photographers and journalists when there are occasions that the learning centre clients participate in. Members of the section of cultural conservation are responsible for arranging traditional shows. Members of the data recording section are responsible for recording meeting summaries and writing reports following activities. Moreover, they have to arrange the places where activities occur and where classes on Sundays take place.

Cooperation between each of the five divisions is involved in planning year-round activities. The coordination division was needed to connect members of each

section, while other members spent time discussing plans, creating artwork for decorations, and coordinating with other divisions' members. Those moments brought an opportunity to engage in the process of sharing attitudes with their friends. Their emotional bond and trust in one another built strong relationships and supported the process of sharing attitudes, influencing them to share ideas while working together (see also Hsu et al., 2007, p.930; McAllister, 1995; Gabarro, 1978; Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998; Panteli and Sockalingam, 2005). Such experiences may be not understood through workshop sessions in classes provided by outsiders, but the experiences of expression are gathered directly from activities and organisations like 'Ramonya Youth Organisation Thailand,' as these spaces allowed adolescent migrants to learn how to work as organisers rather than factory workers.

### **The Network of Community-based Support Providers**

Interrelationships among actors who provide support and other actors who support recipients can be found in the social network that supports migrants in this area. There is an exchange of resources and information across groups within the network of support providers that helps increase their ability to respond to migrants' needs (see Dentato et al., 2005, p. 324). While group members' role is to provide support to community members, senior group members and community leaders also support them. Information is transferred from senior supporters from larger self-help groups to small unit self-help group staff. Once I talked to a leader of an adolescent group who worked full-time in the factory while arranging plans for various activities for the rest of her time. She pointed out that her extensive experience working in groups as a member allowed her to gradually learn how groups were organised and to learn the roles and responsibilities of each group worker. Because she contacted and consulted with the group leaders from her network, she was able to make decisions in matters that caused her group trouble.

The provision of training activities and sharing information and experiences from community-based supporters brings about adolescent migrants' development. An opportunity to work in self-help groups to make a contribution to the community and to gain support from senior supporters is seen as 'lifelong learning' or 'community education' (Smith, 2009 cited in Simon and Ward, 2010, p.100), which leads to the development of individuals' skills, confidence, and the reinforcement of community due to an ability to work with people in the community (Scottish Executive, 2003 cited in Simon and Ward, 2010, p.100). This differs from education in classrooms or learning centres, which can be classified as 'education-in-its-narrower-sense' (ENS), emphasising an ability, outcome, and success of learners.

Kai, a member of the Mon women's group and a member of Ramonya Youth Organisation Thailand, explained that group members could learn how senior group members acted in public when senior group members sent them to group meetings and other significant events. These opportunities increased their communication skills and skills that were necessary for working in teams. She described the etiquette, the practice of being a group member, duties, and the use of formal conversations that she learned from senior group members:

*'Ma-Ngue-Ra-Aow Ya-Moo-Aoi-Kaw ... My name is Miss ... Talking like this, you have to say your name and your position in the group. For example, if you're a student, you may say ... I'm a student working as ... blah blah blah. Then you say why you decided to study in your university. For example, for me, I would say, 'Because I could not speak Thai many years ago. After I arrived at Thailand, I felt embarrassed and anxious when I saw others being able to speak Thai. Then I thought that if they could speak Thai, I would be able to speak Thai someday. I thought that it would be unforgivable if I had plenty of time to practice speaking Thai but I did not study and practice using Thai.' I would say something like this. It's about personal courage as well. After I finish introducing myself to the meeting's group members like this, others may say something differently to introduce themselves. I don't know how others say it, but I know that I want to say something at the group meeting like this. I didn't know other members before; I only used to meet them...'*

(the 2<sup>nd</sup>, February, 2015)

## 5.4 Community-based Support Providers: Religious Institutions

Religious institutions are another type of agency that provides support to adolescent migrants in this area. Buddhist organisations or temples in Samut Sakhon play roles in the lives of adolescent migrants and their families in maintaining migrants' ethnic identity, culture, and language in the community (see Souza, 2016, p.136; Dzialtuvaite, 2006; Freston, 2008). Temples are where migrants' Buddhism-related activities are held from one generation to the next. Since this place is seen as an organisation that possesses shared culture with them, migrants are able to maintain their cultural practice. Their traditional ways of life related to Buddhist beliefs and practices are likely to not be the same as those of Thais due to Buddhism rituals maintained by Mon monks and abbots.

Religion brings integration to the community and reflects ethnicity (see Peschke, 2009, p.367). In Songkran-day (traditional Thai and Burmese new year's day), the activities that natives and migrants participate in—pouring water on monks and the elderly, the practice of playing with water together, shows the harmony of people living in this area. These practices come from a shared culture and religion in the region. This agency brings about a closer relationship between migrants and natives. It leads to integration in the community, as both migrants and natives are allowed to participate in these activities. Buddhism-related and culture-related activities can enhance the sense of belonging, linking connectivity with emotional attachment and the recognition of being 'part of the same community' (Colombo and Rebughini, 2012, p.102, 111). In this regard, adolescent migrants are not excluded as much as others who struggle with prejudices. Mon migrants are considered 'human,' and are extended equality in selecting the space and activities where they belong. Further, religious institutions play a role in encouraging individuals to adjust to difference and pluralism in the community. While natives become more accepting of those who possess a strong acknowledgment of the specificity of Mon ethnic culture when they participate in Buddhism-related and same-root-related activities, adolescent migrants' ability to deal with or adapt to different social and cultural values held by natives tends to be improved, since they are encouraged to engage in activities in which both Thai-Mon people and Thai natives join.

Since most activities that adolescent migrant workers participate in take place in the temple, this agency is significant in the way that it encourages adolescent migrants



to engage in the process of sharing attitudes through facilitating group activities. Despite historical conflicts with the police, Mon migrants keep arranging this event here without worry. In considering the role in responding to the needs for a sense of security, this agency constitutes the balance in power relations derived from local authorities affecting migrants (see also Peschke, 2009, p.368). Further, the agent from the religious organisation acts as the community's gatekeeper, i.e., 'an individual who acts as a filter' (Macdonald and William, 1993, p.420; Keuch, 1987), protecting the community from being disturbed by outsiders while withholding information (Macdonald and William, 1993, p.420; Ettlie, 1985) as needed to bring benefits to the community. Thus, I realize that Buddhist temples in Samut Sakhon are the most suitable places for migrants to host cultural activities linked to Mon ethnic identity and educational activities. When adolescent migrants need the sense of security and support, this agency provides support to them. Free education in Buddhist temples cannot be offered unless there is the cooperation from the religious organisation's supporters who have their own autonomy and are independent from the government and local authorities. Apart from the educational support that adolescent migrants gain, the sense of security is also improved when adolescent migrants receive free education from cooperation between self-help groups and religious organisations.



▲ Photo 19: Adolescent migrants (students from the Thai-Mon learning center, Wat Pom) enjoying activities in the temple.

► Photo 20: the role of Buddhist monk in providing educational support to adolescent migrants.



Religious institutions also play the role of the mediator among the people. While this agency makes a huge contribution to the community and generates positivity that increases individuals' well-being, cooperation with community leaders and the network of supporters benefits and strengthens the relationship within the network of the educational support providers and receivers. When there are projects for the development of the community or new projects leading to a change in the community, such as building the new Thai-Mon learning centre building, the agents from religious organisations (Buddhist abbots) are invited to converse with project coordinators and community leaders. They work to spread information about charity projects to support

the community; significant coordinators and information providers have a strong bond with their community members.



◀ Photo 21: the network of Buddhist abbots and community leaders and the discussion about particular educational missions in the temple

It is possible that Government support in response to migrants' needs may be replaced with support from religious institutions. Community participation or action from adolescent migrants, young migrants' parents, and community members can indicate an involvement in the processes of decision-making for the benefits for their own community (Simon and Ward, 2010, p.16). When the community is affected by insufficient support, religious institutions create a cooperative atmosphere or act as a centre of the community by contacting community leaders, heads of self-help groups, and agents from the network of supporters while encouraging the process of sharing attitudes to ensure a change in the community. This also shows how Buddhist organisations stimulate the community members to be responsible for their community. This agency helps stimulate abilities of individuals to leave the 'circle of dependency' and uphold 'initiative and choice' (Clarke et al, 1998, p.381; Simon and Ward, 2010, p.15) rather than being dependent on the role of local governors and local policy-makers. This relationship has a positive impact on migrants.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Conclusion**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This thesis explores the encouragement and limitations of the opportunities adolescent migrant workers have to express attitudes about child labour, economic and non-economic activities, and exploitation. It investigates the process of sharing attitudes about those concepts among adolescent migrants and among NGOs and community leaders. The study also identifies the benefits of the process of sharing attitudes from the perspective of adolescent migrants. This research was conducted with adolescent migrant workers in Samut Sakhon province, Thailand over 5 months in 2015-2016. Its findings are drawn from 9 case studies, inputs from 16 focus group participants (between 17 and 19 years of age), and 10 interviews with officials from Thai schools and NGOs, community leaders, and staff of learning centres.

In this chapter I identify research findings, explaining how biases, power relations, and particular cultures of expression are considered factors limiting opportunities for sharing attitudes among adolescent migrants. These limitations exist despite the presence of networks of supporters in the community that seek to increase opportunities for sharing attitudes among adolescent migrant workers. I also mention several ways in which adolescent migrant workers respond to the limited opportunities to share attitudes: through the processes of self- adaptation and selection of space and activities and the creation of personal tactics. Engagement in non-economic activities, such as working in self-help groups, and improving relationships between adolescent migrants and their supporters lead to the sharing of attitudes, ideas, and insights due to trust. Benefits of sharing attitudes through participation in self-help groups and focus groups, and the implications for policy and practice, are also included in this chapter.

#### **6.2 Limited Opportunities for Adolescent Migrants to Express Themselves in the Community**

Contexts in which there are biases, power relations, and particular cultures of expression influence opportunities for the sharing of attitudes among adolescent migrants. Power relations in the workplace influence migrants' opportunities to share attitudes and speak for themselves. A hierarchy of social positions not only exists where there is a relationship between employers, migrant workers, senior workers, and adolescent migrant workers, but also in interactions between local Thai people and migrant workers who are perceived as 'others' (Intuman, 2008, p.17). Burmese migrants earning money from selling their low-skilled labour (Baoner, 2007a, p.12) are judged based on the jobs they perform. Since migrants' jobs (in fisheries) are under dirty, physically demanding, and high-risk conditions (Chantavanich, 2006; Baoner, 2007a, p.10; Intuman, 2008, p.17) or described as 'triple-D' jobs (dirty, demeaning and dangerous) (Pearson and Kusakabe, 2012, p.154; Arnold, 2004), locals perceive a

difference between natives and migrant labourers. Those who self-identify as Mon are also often understood by Thai people to be 'Burma' citizens who do not understand their authentic identity, which involves their status bound to the state (Baonerd, 2007b, p.9, 13). As a result of natives' stereotypes that lack perspective on cultural differences, there is no doubt that adolescent migrant workers are unlikely to be supported and provided with an opportunity to share their attitudes.

Further, multiple strategies of managing and controlling the movement of migrants and regulations containing biases permeate local authorities' perceptions. These biases lead to actions that cause anxiety among adolescent migrants, such as interventions by police at various checkpoints and requests for identity documents, thwarting an opportunity for adolescent migrants to express themselves. Adolescent migrants are not expected to share attitudes on matters of work with others. They lack opportunities to express their insights, experiences, and requests for equality to live without fear in the community. Power relations outside their workplace influence their interests and the way in which they express themselves.

Apart from social position and social differences indicating opportunity for expression, systems of group-based hierarchy also have an impact. Adolescent migrants of different ages and genders express their attitudes differently. Younger adolescent workers are likely to develop their opinions based on suggestions from older workers. Young people know that they are limited to speaking after older people, and male members are expected to share their thoughts first. Further, those who lack educational opportunities in Thai schools, where there are activities promoting students' expression, tend to have a lower level of confidence in speaking and sharing attitudes. Without an experience of participating in activities in their schools and learning centres, adolescent migrants are likely to lack opportunities to get accustomed to the presentation of their ideas and perceptions and to build confidence to share ideas.

### **6.3 The Roles of Networks of Supporters in Increasing Opportunities to Share Attitudes**

Networks of supporters in the community increase opportunities for sharing attitudes among adolescent migrant workers. With support from the network of supporters, the chance to share attitudes is improving. There are learning centres established by NGOs, Mon groups, and the Office of Non-formal and Informal Education, all of which are creating opportunities and practices to improve the frequency of sharing insights to lead to an increasing level of individual confidence. The chance to work with self-help groups and participate in activities also leads adolescent migrants to engage in the process of sharing attitudes, which allows them to share attitudes with friends in groups and express their interests in public.

One strategy of stimulating expression opportunities may be suitable for a particular community, despite being inappropriate for another community. The most useful strategies are those that community members develop themselves as agents creating strategies for their own community. Those strategies may not be generalisable or guaranteed to result in the improvement of self-confidence among adolescent migrants or lead to changing the pattern and frequency of sharing perceptions in other communities. When strategies to bring about opportunities for adolescent migrants to

share their insights are needed, agents from the network of supporters have unique strategies of creating opportunities for migrants to learn the process of sharing attitudes by offering activities that encourage migrant workers to participate.

Community leaders and agents from the network of supporters who get close to adolescent migrants play the role of setting the practice of expression, introducing a pattern of public expression and inviting them to participate in activities that stimulate learning and sharing of attitudes with the public and with others. The interaction between support givers and support receivers improves until trust exists and the frequency of expression is enhanced. This implies that the network of migrants serves the needs of migrants and promotes various kinds of opportunities that migrant workers cannot access alone. The network of supporters encourages adolescent migrants to express themselves, providing a chance for them to get involved in activities that allow them to share their perceptions with others.

## **6.4 The Reflexivity of Individual Expression Dependent on Space and the Stimulation of Individuals' Expression**

The limited opportunities to share attitudes do not considerably affect the expression of adolescent migrants' attitudes and experiences. Adolescent migrants share attitudes through the process of the selection of space and activities, the process of self-adaptation and the creation of personal tactics.

### **Spaces for Individual and Group Expression**

A variety of spaces allowing for individual expression can indicate the degree to which adolescent migrant workers have the opportunity to share insights about work, experiences, skills, and feelings. Adolescent migrants are not encouraged to express themselves or raise concern for human equality. Opportunities to share their attitudes in public are restricted, and complaints about hardships from working life, personal problems, and perceptions based on personal experiences can be secretly communicated with their close friends outside their workplaces or with parents at home. However, they choose to participate in religion-related activities and engage with group activities that do not lead to domestic conflicts in relation to political expression.

Temples seem to be open spaces for expression, as key agents like Buddhist monks have their own authority and a privileged status in balancing the government's authority in their societies. This role is accompanied by cooperation with Thai-Mon activists and Mon community leaders who play a role in generating activities and following effective strategies for the promotion and protection of individuals' right to live without fear. The Buddhist-related and group activities formed by migrants themselves are opportunities for adolescent migrants to participate. The shared-root background of natives or Thai-Mon people and enriched cultures embedded in Samut Sakhon Province can be a supportive factor that encourages Mon migrants to maintain their cultural values and expressions in accordance with the context and support of the year-round occurrence of Buddhism-related activities. Adolescent migrants also benefit from deep relationships with abbots, other migrants, and natives, fostering community

unity while providing an opportunity for local people to accept and respect differences, bringing about an inclusive society rather than social discrimination.

Cyberspace also influences adolescent migrant workers' practices of expression. Cyberspace is perceived as a space that allows users to share insights regardless of differences in social status. Adolescent migrants, who are limited from expressing their points of view in public and who are restricted by cultural beliefs linked to systems of social hierarchy and expectations from shared-culture community members, can access cyberspace and express their interests and insights. In Samut Sakhon province, the Internet becomes an important space for sharing attitudes and personal identities that reflect migrants' engagement in economic activities, their interests, Buddhism-related perceptions, ethnic identity, and select information.

Engagement in cyberspace indicates that the influence of globalised communication is prioritised over cultural norms and practices of expression. In this study, it is apparent that online expression is less affected by social expectations and belief systems that influence a pattern of individual expression. Access to the Internet presents a rare opportunity to scrutinise and compare verbal and non-verbal expressions of adolescent migrants.

### **The Influence of Trust and the Frequency of Expression**

Trust, which develops in social relationships over time, varies by the frequency of interaction and experiences of participating and working in groups. Trust becomes an active determinant of the ability to crack systems of group-based hierarchy, which influences individual expression. Generally, cultural beliefs and social norms according to an age system, a gender system, and an arbitrary-set system (Pratto et al., 2006, p.273) influence individuals' expression and guide what is expected as appropriate group expression. This implies that there is controversy within the influencing factors generating the frequency of individuals' expression and the pattern of expression in social relationships among adolescent migrants. In a global society, cultural beliefs and norms relating to means of expression are challenged and redefined. In accordance with the culture of expression attached to the system of social hierarchy and social expectation, it is possible that trust helps individuals to become more confident to step out of traditional patterns of expression and to speak out. Whereas cultural beliefs and the system of social hierarchy limit adolescent migrants from sharing attitudes, trust leads adolescent migrants to be confident enough to share their insights.

### **Personal Tactics to Identify Opportunities and Increase Outlets for Expressions**

Migrant youth create and use tactics to deal with challenging circumstances. Tactics can be regarded as 'choices,' which are seen as 'a form of agency' (Reay and Lucey, 2003, p.121). In this study, a series of choices shows how active power users are when they own the ability to achieve opportunities by creating opportunities on their own and making '...a virtue of necessity' when there are limited choices (Reay and Lucey, 2003, p.121). Under particular contexts and with limited support and few

opportunities, migrant adolescents have been successful in creating their own opportunities by transforming their positions into appropriate ones for themselves.

Adolescent migrants opt to become adults, despite the increased responsibility, rather than being provided with educational support, which is altered by a policy aimed at raising educational standards and promoting social equality. They select positions in the community through 'the act of accepting' that they are subordinates and by 'being patient' when getting involved in situations that are mentally disturbing, despite the desire to be themselves and to be respected as humans and as people of Mon ethnicity who possess a sense of innate authentic belonging that differs from being regarded as 'Burmese.'

Avoidance of conflict with local police officers and the option to abide negative attitudes show how prudent they are when they decide to create a sense of security in a space that is not their own. Despite not being regarded as agents with the power to negotiate in response to inequality and intimidation, adolescent migrant workers choose to control their reactions to avoid problems, since they identify themselves as 'subordinate agents' (see Scott, 2001, p.2) in an imbalanced power relationship. Acting in opposition to local officers may cause a sense of insecurity rather than confidence developed by being obedient.

The ability to choose appropriate activities regarding circumstances also shows a sense of agency. Adolescent migrant workers get involved in their community as volunteers with the temple, joining self-help groups, and working to support other students. It includes the decision to choose with whom they share experiences and talk about matters (friends, parents, or teachers) and where they share attitudes about work, individual experiences, and identities. Their agency is manifest in the ways that they maintain their cultural values and rituals. They appropriately demonstrate cultural signs representing that their ethnicity is tied to their identities.

## **6.5 Benefits of Sharing Attitudes through Focus Groups and the Process of Sharing Attitudes in the Community**

In this study, the benefits of the process of sharing attitudes are viewed from two main sources: the existence of activities formed in the community and those derived from the creation of a demonstrated model of the process of sharing attitudes, or the 'focus group' method.

### **Benefits of Sharing Attitudes from Working in (Self-Help) Groups**

The development of communication skills, relationships, and self-adaptation are benefits of sharing attitudes, and these skills are increased through involvement in self-help groups. Sharing perceptions helps people to improve their communication skills. Since the process of sharing attitudes relates to interaction and communication, the relationship between agents who transfer information and those who receive transferred information is also likely to be developed.

In addition to improving the process of social interaction through working in groups, self-adaptation and self-development occurs. Provided with an opportunity to present themselves, adolescent migrants who request acknowledgement of differences and unity within their ethnic group decide to take part in self-help group activities, gaining benefits. Individual experiences of engaging in conversations and collaborative activities can improve self-adaptation. Adolescent migrants are able to learn how to adjust to others and react appropriately to different situations when they work with self-help groups. Participating in group discussions, adolescent migrants can learn the etiquette of group discussions, the practice of being a group member, and how to communicate in formal conversations. The selection of appropriate manners, accompanied by verbal expression, leads to harmonious interactions, long-term relationships, and accumulated supportive networks. These skills improve their social network.

### **Benefits of Sharing Attitudes in Group Discussions**

Setting focus group discussions as a part of this study's research methods contributes to a better understanding of the benefits of the process of sharing attitudes among adolescent migrant workers in Samut Sakhon province. Group discussion benefits participants who engage in the process of self-learning. Those who had never experienced sharing attitudes in groups could understand the process of sharing attitudes. Participants suggested that they became more confident about sharing their ideas with outsiders on topics relevant to their work and that they gained support from friends in the group discussion when they shared experiences and difficulties confronted in the workplace. Adolescent migrants gain perceptions that can help them live more safely. Ideas gained from group discussions can be used and developed in adolescent migrants' real lives.

Further, the benefits of sharing attitudes in groups include the strengthening of relationships. There is also a possibility that participants bring creativity and generate useful ideas in the group. Sharing ideas, experiences, and thoughts brings about the possibility that adolescent migrants can engage in discussions on future occasions. The level of confidence that is improved among group members tends to increase after they join activities that allow them to express their attitudes. The use of this method opened up opportunities for expression for the first time for many case study participants. When they engage in activities that allow them to share ideas, they tend to share more openly when they have a chance to engage in other activities in the future.

## **6.6 The Future of the Cooperation with Multi-Agencies in the Community**

The process of sharing attitudes brings about benefits, not only for adolescent migrants, but also for the community. Allowing adolescent migrants to share attitudes leads to the exposure of hidden issues in the community. Limiting an adolescent migrant's opportunity to share attitudes and experiences, particularly work experiences, may increase the level of social insecurity, instances of child labour, and risks in the community.



Currently, there is a scarcity of opportunities for adolescent migrants to share attitudes in public. Adolescent migrant workers face the challenges of state strategies to manage and control their movement—through the complex system of nationality verification, immigration administration, and national regulations containing biases that spread to local authorities' and natives' perceptions and citing concerns of national security. Few adolescent migrant workers can access information about the right to free expression, labour rights, and human rights. Accompanied with their culture of expression, which also influences the frequency and pattern of sharing attitudes, these barriers silence them, as they have to be selective in what they share in order to avoid conflict. Adolescent migrants are discouraged from sharing attitudes and expressing interests, particularly views and ideas involving their work and economic activities. They are perceived as people who live mainly for work, not as those who form groups to discuss their problems and attitudes, and their ideas are not valued for making change in society.

The limited opportunity for expression among migrant workers, accompanied by biases and systems controlling and managing migrants that thwart the opportunity to share experiences and perceptions related to economic activities, imply that situations in this area are unlikely to be resolved by government plans. The implementation of social policies with the cooperation of solely NGOs may be insufficient to bring about positive changes for the community, unless there is an understanding of their roles, the relationship between NGOs and migrants, and the roles of community-based multi-agents and unless there is an encouragement to share attitudes in the community.

It is interesting to create a cooperative atmosphere in the community and to set up projects that allow more spaces for migrants of all ages to share attitudes. These spaces accept the equality of individuals' expression and minimize social difference. The effectiveness of policy initiatives that raise awareness of social exclusion and acceptance of adolescent migrants' shared attitudes may happen if there is cooperation from the industrial sector, households, community leaders, and agents from self-help groups. I propose that sharing attitudes should be stimulated within and across the network of community-based supporters. The strengthened network of supporters may be developed into a network of negotiators who are able to bring about positive changes that increase the level of community self-dependence. If cooperation were in place across community-based supporters, NGOs, and government, there would also be enhanced unity, as natives and migrants would co-create solutions and strategies to address child labour and human trafficking, and the negative aspects in the community would become national issues of concern. Further, natives' perspectives of the network of migrants and adolescent migrants would improve with respect to the potential contribution of adolescent migrant workers and the network of migrants.

The continuation of plans created by community-based agencies for an increasing ability to share productive attitudes online and within self-help groups and to increase the frequency of sharing attitudes is also necessary. Self-help groups should emphasise the process of improving the potential of individuals to contribute to ideas that benefit and develop the community. Further, cooperation between NGOs, the educational sector, the industrial sector, and community-based agencies may lead to a more inclusive society and improve individuals' opportunities to share attitudes relevant to economic activities, academic perceptions, and life lessons.

Organising self-help group activities can be a strategy to increase engagement in the process of sharing attitudes among adolescent migrants. Cooperation across the NGO and educational sectors and activities that promote the sharing of attitudes can benefit (young) participants. Their level of literacy, knowledge of the prevention of exploitation, and the prevention of risks such as AIDS, drugs, and sexual harassment increase through information that NGOs provide. Individuals' confidence in the level of achieved academic knowledge and life lessons also improve. These changes can bring about the possibility of sharing attitudes with their friends and an improved quality of shared perceptions.

There should be open space for the sharing of attitudes in the workplace and effective responses to perceptions shared by migrant workers in cooperation with the industrial sector. Activities in the workplace should go beyond aims to entertain workers, creating a cooperative atmosphere in which there exists a process of sharing attitudes. Since there are small units of self-help groups formed in the workplace, there should be space in the workplace for sharing attitudes relevant to working life. Young migrants should be encouraged to form a group to discuss problems in the workplace.

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## List of Grey Literature

|                       |                          |                             |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
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| Blogs                 | Book chapters            | Brochures/pamphlets         |
| Conference papers     | Mon Course materials     | Dissertations               |
| E-prints              | Essays                   | Government documents        |
| Guidelines            | Interviews               | Journals                    |
| Legislation           | Memoranda                | Newsletters                 |
| NGO Programs/Projects | NGO Publications/reports | Non-commercial translations |
| Policy statements     | Press releases           | Research reports            |
| Speeches              | Statistics               | Surveys                     |

## Appendix

### Information Sheet (for young participants)<sup>11</sup>

**The research: Adolescent Migrant Worker Experiences and Attitudes about Child Labour in Samut Sakhon, Thailand**

**Researcher: Kamonwan Roengsumran**

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<sup>11</sup> Thai language version was given to participants.



My name is Kamonwan Roengsumran. (You can call me "**Ann**".)  
I am a research student (Mphil) at University of Sussex in the United Kingdom.



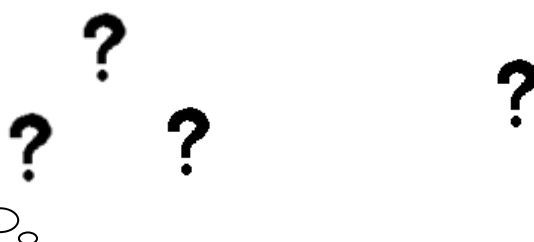
I am doing research on the topic 'Adolescent Migrant Worker Experiences and Attitudes about Child Labour in Samut Sakhon, Thailand' for my course.



Research can be seen as  
'collecting or analysing data related to their project'.  
(Bhattacharjee, 2012, p.1)

**What is research?**

**How is my research ?**



**1**

I'm collecting data for understanding whether and how you are encouraged to speak, express ideas or comment about terms child labour, your jobs, your activities and about how to prevent yourself from being exploited.

**2**

I'm collecting data for understanding your ideas, attitudes about terms child labour, your jobs, your activities and about how to prevent yourself from being exploited.

**3**

I'm collecting data for understanding benefits that you gain from speaking and sharing attitudes and ideas about such things with other friends and NGO workers.

**4**

I'm collecting data for understanding how your attitudes and ideas about how such things bring benefits to NGO workers and to the public.






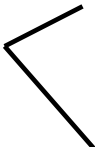
I need your help. I would really like to hear what you think about terms child labour, your jobs, your activities and about how to prevent yourself from being abused. Can you join me and have a talk with me and/or have a talk with me and your friends in group?

## In our discussions/talks

- ☆ Our talk would be private. I will not tell your teachers or your family what you say.
- ☆ The interview will take no longer than one hour. / The group interview will take no longer than 1 hour and 30 minutes.
- ☆ You can ask for the interview to stop at any time.
- ☆ You may speak Burmese sometimes if you would like.
- ☆ I will tape record the interviews to help me remember what they have said and to help me write a report.
- ☆ No one will be named in the report.





You can choose to **Say Yes**  If you do want to take part, please ask someone to help you read the form.

**OR**  **Say No**

I would be very grateful if you could sign the attached form and return it to me.



 If you don't understand any information/details in this information sheet and/or in a consent form, please ask me as soon as possible or contact me 081-8660689 or follow the addresses at any time.

 If you would like to know more about my research or any further information relevant to this information sheet, please ask me as soon as possible or contact me 081-8660689 or follow the addresses at any time.

**Thank you for your help &  
Thank you for taking the time to read this document**



**Contact: Ann**

(Kamonwan Roengsumran)

PO.BOX 2000 Chulalongkorn, Praya-Thai  
Road, Pratumwan, Bangkok 10332 (office)

Tel. 081-8660689 (mobile phone)



## Information Sheet (for NGO/Adult Participants)<sup>12</sup>

**The research: Adolescent Migrant Worker Experiences and Attitudes about Child Labour in Samut Sakhon, Thailand**

**Researcher: Kamonwan Roengsumran**

Contact Address: 179 Jaransanitwong Road, Bangkokyai, Bangkok 10600 tel.02-4670493, 081-8660689

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<sup>12</sup> Thai language or Burmese language version was given to participants.

My name is Kamonwan Roengsumran. I am a student from the University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdoms. I am doing research about how adolescent migrant workers are promoted to express their attitudes about terms child labour, economic activities and non-economic activities and the ways to prevent themselves from the issue, how they share attitudes and experiences about such terms and the prevention against the issue, how they understand such terms and the ways to prevent themselves from child labour. This research will also explore how adolescent migrant workers gain benefits from sharing attitudes with NGOs and others and how adolescent migrant workers' attitudes and ideas regarding terms child labour, economic activities and non-economic activities and the prevention of the issue make a contribution to NGOs and public.

Regarding the interviews, I have planned to talk to participants who take part for up to an hour, depending on each individual. In considering the focus group discussions, I will invite participants to talk in group for sharing attitudes about child labour, economic activities and non-economic activities and the ways to prevent themselves from the issue and about the process of sharing attitudes. Focus group discussions will take approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes per session. You can ask for the interview to stop at any time. I will tape record the interviews to help me remember what they have said and to help me write a report. However, the interviews will be confidential and the only people who listen to the interview will be myself, my supervisors and my examiners, who will be checking my work. No one will be named in the report.

You can say 'yes' if you would like to take part, or say 'no' if you don't agree to take part. If you are happy to take part, I would be very thankful if you could sign the attached form and return it to me.

If you would like to know more about my research or any further information relevant to this information sheet, please ask me as soon as possible or contact me 081-8660689 or follow the above addresses at any time.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter and for your help.

Yours sincerely

Kamonwan Roengsumran

## คำยินยอมเพื่อใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูลภาคสนามเพื่องานวิจัย

### Consent Form for Participants<sup>13</sup>

หัวข้องานวิจัย: การแลกเปลี่ยนทัศนคติต่อประเด็นแรงงานเด็กและหนทางป้องกันปัญหานี้เกี่ยวกับ

แรงงานเด็ก : การศึกษาการมีส่วนร่วมจากแรงงานเด็กย้ายถิ่นในพื้นที่จังหวัดสมุทรสาคร

ผู้วิจัย: นางสาว กมลวรรณ เรืองสำราญ

**The research: Adolescent Migrant Worker Experiences and Attitudes about Child Labour in Samut Sakhon, Thailand**

**Researcher: Kamonwan Roengsumran**

(\*ข้อมูลนี้จะถูกปกปิดเป็นความลับ This information will be treated as confidential)

กรุณาใส่เครื่องหมาย ✓ และ กรอกข้อมูลด้านล่างให้ครบถ้วน/*Please initial box and complete the following information*

1. ฉัน/ผมขอยืนยันว่า ฉัน/ผม อ่านและเข้าใจข้อมูลในเอกสารประกอบการเก็บข้อมูลในการทำวิจัยนี้แล้ว ฉัน/ผมเข้าใจว่าฉัน/ผม ยังคงมีโอกาสพิจารณาข้อมูลต่างๆ ซักถามปัญหาและได้รับคำตอบไขข้อข้องใจอย่างดี / I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.

☐

2. ฉัน/ผม เข้าใจว่าฉันยินดีที่จะให้ข้อมูลเพื่อการวิจัยนี้และเข้าใจว่าฉันสามารถถอนตัวจากการให้ข้อมูลได้ทุกเมื่อไม่ว่าในกรณีใดๆ / I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.

☐

3. ฉัน/ผม เข้าใจว่าข้อมูลต่างๆที่ ฉัน/ผม ให้กับนักวิจัยจะถูกใช้ในงานวิจัยและถูกเผยแพร่ลงสิ่งพิมพ์ต่างๆ หรือ/และการนำเสนอข้อมูลทางสไลด์ต่างๆ/ I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, articles or presentations by the research team.

☐

4. ฉัน/ผม เข้าใจว่าชื่อของฉัน/ผมจะไม่ปรากฏในงานวิจัย บทความ หรือการนำเสนอข้อมูลทางสไลด์ใดๆ / I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations.

☐

5. ฉัน/ผม ตกลงยินยอมมีส่วนร่วมกับการงานวิจัยนี้ / I agree to take part in the above study.

☐

ชื่อ/Name of Participant

วันที่/Date

ลายเซ็น/Signature

นักวิจัย/Researcher

วันที่/Date

ลายเซ็น/Signature

หากกรอกข้อมูลแล้ว โปรดส่งคืนให้นักวิจัยด้วยค่ะ **When completed, please return**

ผู้ให้ข้อมูลจะได้รับเอกสารนี้พร้อมทั้งข้อมูลอื่นๆเกี่ยวกับงานวิจัย ส่วนเอกสารต้นฉบับจะถูกเก็บในแฟ้มเอกสารของนักวิจัย **One copy will be given to the participant and the original to be kept in the file of the researcher**

<sup>13</sup> Consent form in Burmese language version was provided to some NGOs' staff members.

## Parental Consent Form <sup>14</sup>

**The research: Adolescent Migrant Worker Experiences and Attitudes about Child Labour in Samut Sakhon, Thailand**

**Researcher: Kamonwan Roengsumran**

Contact Address: 179 Jaransanitwong Road, Bangkokyai, Bangkok 10600 tel.02-4670493, 081-9173955

(\*Parents/guardians of all participants aged under 18 are asked to complete a consent form before the start of interviews and focus group discussions.\* This information will be treated as confidential)

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<sup>14</sup> Thai language version was given to participants.

Dear Parent/Guardian

My name is Kamonwan Roengsumran. I am a student from the University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdoms. I am doing research about how adolescent migrant workers are promoted to express their attitudes about terms child labour, economic activities and non-economic activities and the ways to prevent themselves from the issue, how they share attitudes about such terms and the prevention against the issue, how they understand such terms and the ways to prevent themselves from child labour. This research will also explore how adolescent migrant workers gain benefits from sharing attitudes with NGOs and others and how adolescent migrant workers' attitudes and ideas regarding terms child labour, economic activities and non-economic activities and the prevention of the issue make a contribution to NGOs and public.

Due to your permission to let me talk to your son or daughter, I would really appreciate your help with this research.

Regarding the interviews, I have planned to talk to each adolescent migrant worker who takes part for up to an hour, depending on each individual. In considering the focus group discussions, I will invite young participants to talk in group, share attitudes about child labour, economic activities and non-economic activities and the ways to prevent themselves from the issue and about sharing attitudes with NGO and other young migrants. I will tape record the interviews to help me remember what they have said and to help me write a report. However, the interviews will be confidential and the only people who listen to the interview will be myself, my supervisors and my examiner, who will be checking my work. No-one will be named in the report.

If you are happy for your son or daughter to take part, I would be very thankful if you could sign the attached form (part1/page 4) and return it to me. In contrast, if you are not happy to let your son or daughter to take part, please sign the attached form (part2/page 5) and return it to me.

If you would like to know more about the research, please contact me 081-9173955 or follow the above addresses.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this letter and for your help.

Yours sincerely

Kamonwan Roengsumran

**Part 1- I agreed**

I am happy to let my son/daughter\* take part in the research: 'Adolescent Migrant Worker Experiences and Attitudes about Child Labour in Samut Sakhon, Thailand'

- I agree that the interview can be recorded.
- I understand that the interview will be confidential.
- I understand that my son/daughter can stop the interview at any time.
- I understand that if my son/daughter does not want to take part, it will not affect him/her if help is needed in the future.

Signature.....(Parent/Guardian)

Full name (print).....

**When completed, please return to researcher**



**part 2 – I disagreed**

I am aware that my child \* has agreed to take part in your research: 'Adolescent Migrant Worker Experiences and Attitudes about Child Labour in Samut Sakhon, Thailand'

I **do not** wish my child to take part in the project.

Signature.....( Parent/Guardian)

Full name (print).....

**When completed, please return to researcher**

## **Interview Questions for Young Participants (Outline)**

### Personal Information:

1. What is your current job?
2. How long have you worked for this job? Is this your first job? How much have you earned money from this job? What did you do before doing this job? How long did you do that job? How much you earned money from that/the previous job?
3. How old are you? What age do you start working for your first job?
4. When you changed your job, did anyone invite you to apply for another job, or you had to find jobs by yourself? Why did you change your job? Don't you like your previous job? Why? What is the difference between your previous job(s) and your current job?
5. Each day, what do you do for this job? Is it hard for you? What are kinds of tasks when you work? Is it too hard for you?
6. What is the job that you like most? Why?
7. From your experience, what is the job that you have ever done and thought that 'it is hard'? How?

### Economic activities and Understanding about terms 'Child Labour', 'Child Exploitation':

1. Have you ever heard terms: 'Child Labour' or 'Child Exploitation'? What do you think about these terms? What are you thinking about it? What kinds of things that relate to this word? What it looks like? What kinds of jobs relating to this word?
2. Are there situations that you think that they are similar to what you mentioned about these terms? How?
3. How about 'OT work'? Does every worker have to do OT jobs? Can you tell employers that you don't want to do OT work? ,In general, you have some free time like today for talking with your friends in the factory? Do you have a break in the factory? How is 'hard work' or 'tough work' from your experience?
4. Have you ever seen children under 17 working in your factory? How? Do younger workers (than you) work lighter job than you? Or they do their job like you do? What do they do?
5. What do you think about people who have the same age as you? What are kinds of risky jobs for people who have the same age as you? What is the kind of job that you think they should not do?

6. What is the kind of job that you think it is not appropriate for people under 18? what kinds of jobs that you think that they are not suitable to them to work?

7. What are activities appropriate for young people under 17 years old and under 15 years old?

8. What age is appropriate for starting working?

9. What about risky jobs in Samut Sakorn? Or, if you have a chance to choose your job, what kinds of jobs that you will not do? Is there any younger workers (than you) doing this job? Have you ever seen them? What should they do rather than working like that?

10. What are the ages of people which are for the only study, what are ages for working or starting working? How can you set it?

#### The prevention of child exploitation:

1. When you work in the factory and you see new people who just start working, how do we know that those people are being exploited?

2. When were you exploited, for example, what would you do? Would go talk to your boss?

3. Have you or your friends had experiences being exploited? When your friends work hard, harder than you, how we can help them to be free from such jobs? Do you see good things or bad things that may happen when you suggest them?

4. How do you we know that we are being exploited? By whom? How? How do you prevent yourself from being exploited?

#### Non-Economic activities:

1. When you finish working each day, what kinds of activities you do?

2. From your working experiences, what is 'the work/job'? And what is the activity, not a job?

3. Do you think that work for free (volunteer) is work? And what's it called? What about your works/jobs that you don't do voluntarily?

#### The process of sharing attitudes:

1. When you working in the factory, have there been workshops or trainings that you joined?

2. Have there been people working outside the factory coming in the factory for visiting you or training or providing you helpful information?

3. Do you know NGOs or organisations like NGO? In this province, is there any organisation working with workers? If you had problems about work, in your mind, what kinds of organisations would help you? What kinds of organisations working and helping you when you guys, workers, have problems about work?
4. When you have some free time during your working time, what topics do you talk to your friends, in general? In your factory, are you allowed to talk to each other?
5. When you have meetings, do they organise the meetings for you or you guys set up your own meetings?
6. What if there is no leader each meeting, can you guys talk about it altogether?
7. If there were good news or new information within your factory, for example, workers would get higher wage, who would you talk to or tell such news to, first?
8. What about talking to each other in the factory, they allow you guys to give suggestions to each other?
9. What about negative news? Have you and your friends ever discussed about anyone being exploited?
10. Between you and friends, you also discuss about problems during working time?
11. Between study and work, do you think you can learn new and different things? Do you enjoy studying or enjoy working more than studying? What do you learn from studying and from working? What about information/knowledge you gain from work? Do you see that you gain different ideas/knowledge/ information from work and from study? How?
13. What about getting ideas/attitudes from other places? From where, you think that from where you gain most ideas?
14. In your class, are there activities like setting a group for discussion? How far are such activities different from discussion in the factory? What about setting groups for talking about something outside school and your factory?
15. What about the chances to have a discussion like this? In general, people who have the same age as you have a chance to talk like this- talking on topics between you and me? Like this?
16. What about talking by using their own language? For example, it is possible that Mon people rather talk to other Mon people in Mon, especially when they have problems in the workplace, and when they can't speak Thai well?
17. I know you use Facebook. Between sharing information and giving comments, which one is your favour? Are there your friends sharing somethings about their work on

Facebook? Do you feel more comfortable to share ideas when using Facebook? Or you still don't like sharing ideas on Facebook? Why?

Benefits of sharing attitudes:

1. Doing like sharing information/attitudes/ideas to each other is good or bad? Are there benefits or drawbacks? How?
2. What are benefits of sharing views for me and for you? How?

■ ■ ■

## Interview Questions for Adult Participants (outline)

### Organization and Encouragement of sharing attitudes:

1. Do you run projects for supporting opportunities in education for migrant workers aged between 17 and 19 years old? What's about other activities that you set for them? How?
2. Is it possible that you can set trainings for migrant workers in factories and educate them? Why?
3. Is it compulsory that official organisations have programs like trainings for all employees? Why?
4. Do you think that youth migrant workers aged 17-19 years old who work and study are likely to be more promoted to participate in activities that urge them to have some expressions? How? Why?
5. There are no places or some places for adolescent migrant workers to express, right? How? Why?
6. Is it possible that young people who gain education are likely to express themselves more? , or it depends on their individual personality?
7. What about the use of Thai language? Is it possible that adolescents who have good Thai language skills or have knowledge of Thai language are likely to express more than ones who aren't able to speak, read and write thai? How?
8. What about expressing attitudes, ideas, and experiences? Do you think/agree/disagree that because they are able to use Thai language, they are likely to have some expression? How?
9. What's about the expression in their peer groups? Do you think that they are likely to show their opinions within groups rather than showing their attitudes to Thais or people outside their own groups? How?
10. Is it possible that they tend to speak up when they have close relationship with their friends? How?
11. How about adolescents who experience activities such as activities that promote their confidence?
12. Before adolescents who study in your learning centre start working, is there any training from your organisation? or they may get it in the factory? How?

13. How about adolescents who have no chance to study but only work? Do you think that they know how to prevent themselves from exploitation and being taken advantage of? How?

Adolescent migrants' economic activities and non-economic activities:

1. How many groups of adolescent migrant workers that can be classified? And how?
2. In general, how old are adolescent migrant workers? When do they actually start working? Is it 17 or 18 years old?
3. What are about economic groups and activities which are set for economic reasons? What's about non-religion related activities related to adolescent migrants?
4. What about trainings or workshops for educating people how to prevent themselves from exploitation?
5. Regarding adolescent's jobs, what are suitable jobs for adoldescents aged 17-19 years old, in your opinion?
6. What about dangerous or risky jobs that you think they do not suit them?
7. Regarding the age that is appropriate for working, do you think that the age of 17 is acceptable for starting working? Or older workers should be accepted to work?
8. Is it possible that young people who are younger than 17 work as hard as others and they are likely to be physically harmed?, are there adolescent workers working harder than others or not harder than other workers from different ages.?
9. How can we set a range of appropriate age for study and for work?
10. What about young people who just start working or people under 17 years old? What kinds of jobs they work and what are kinds of dangerous/risky jobs that should be restricted for them?

Terms: 'Child Labour', 'Child Exploitation':

1. If we are talking about child labour, how will we know what kinds of works and activities relate to terms 'child labour', ' child exploitation'?
2. If we are talking about other activities, non-economic activities, what are kinds of activities that can be involved with exploitation? How do we know whether other activities lead to the issue of exploitation or not? And what are the criteria we use for this judgement?

The process of sharing attitudes:

1. What do you think about the information, knowledge, skills and experiences that 17-19 years old young people working and having a chance to study have? , and those that

ones who have not a chance to study? How different is information, knowledge, skills and experiences gained by both groups?

2. What about the differences in the expression between the first group and the second group?

3. Do youth migrant workers aged 17-19 years old express their attitudes or talk to you or share what they think and their experiences to you, other NGOs or other organisations? Are they likely to talk or share experiences to their friends?

4. What are other obstacles that prevent them from expression or that lead them to be too shy to speak up or share opinions?

5. What would you think about persons who they trust most? Are they parents or friends or NGOs that they are likely to talk to?

6. Do you do need to choose the recipients of messages that you want to send? Do you consider the ages of recipients?

#### Benefits of sharing attitudes:

1. Are attitudes about adolescent migrant workers' activities shared by adolescent migrant workers beneficial for you/NGOs? How?

2. Are adolescent migrant workers' activities shared with you/NGOs beneficial for adolescent migrants? How?

3. What are benefits and drawbacks of sharing attitudes and experiences? /

4. Are there benefits and drawbacks of talking to adolescents? Are adolescent migrant workers affected by sharing views with you? How?

5. Are you influenced by sharing views with child migrant workers? How?

■ ■ ■



## **Focus Group Interview Questions (outline)**

1. What is your current job(for each person)?
2. How long have you worked for this job? Is this your first job?
3. How old are you now? What age do you starting work for your first job?
4. In Samut Sakhon province, how many jobs are there? What are those?
5. Regarding jobs that you mentioned, what are jobs that people having the same age as you do? What is the job that you like most? Why?
6. Regarding jobs that you mentioned, what are jobs that young people aged below 17 years old do?
7. Regarding jobs that you mentioned, what are dangerous jobs for you? Why? What jobs will NOT you do?
8. What age is proper for people starting their first job? What kind of job do those people do?
9. What about the appropriate activities for people aged between 13 and 17 years old? What age should (young) people focus on only study? And what age should they start working?
10. In free days or when you have some free time, what are activities you join? Or hobbies?
11. Do you have experiences of being exploited? How?
12. From your experience, how is hard work? What is 'hard/tough' work? From your experience, what is the job that you have ever done and thought that 'it is hard'? How?
13. How do you we know that we are being exploited? By whom? How? How do you prevent yourself from being exploited? How do you prevent your friends from being exploited?
14. Are there organizations dealing with problems of child exploitation or working for labourers or providing information about the prevention of child exploitation and risks to migrant workers? Do you know NGOS working for migrant workers? How do they help migrant workers?
15. Are there trainings/workshops that you can join or have ever participated in?
16. What kind of knowledge/information/ideas do you get from workplace and from the learning center? How different?

17. Who do you get information/knowledge/ideas from? (such as from teachers,...)  
What about information/knowledge/ideas gained from media?

18. When you work in your factory, do your friends share their experiences or views about working skills to you? How? What kind of information do you get when talking with colleague? When we have an updated news or have some news, who do you share those news with?

19. Have you ever experienced having a group discussion like this? How?

20. Have you ever share ideas/ information/ insights to strangers? Is it necessary that you will share ideas/insights/information only to persons you know? Or Because of your language, you are shy to speak with others? Why are some adolescent migrants shy to talk? That's because their language skills? Do you feel more comfortable to share ideas when using Facebook? Why?

21. Are the benefits and drawbacks of a group discussion like this? What are benefits of sharing views and ideas for me and for you? How?

■ ■ ■